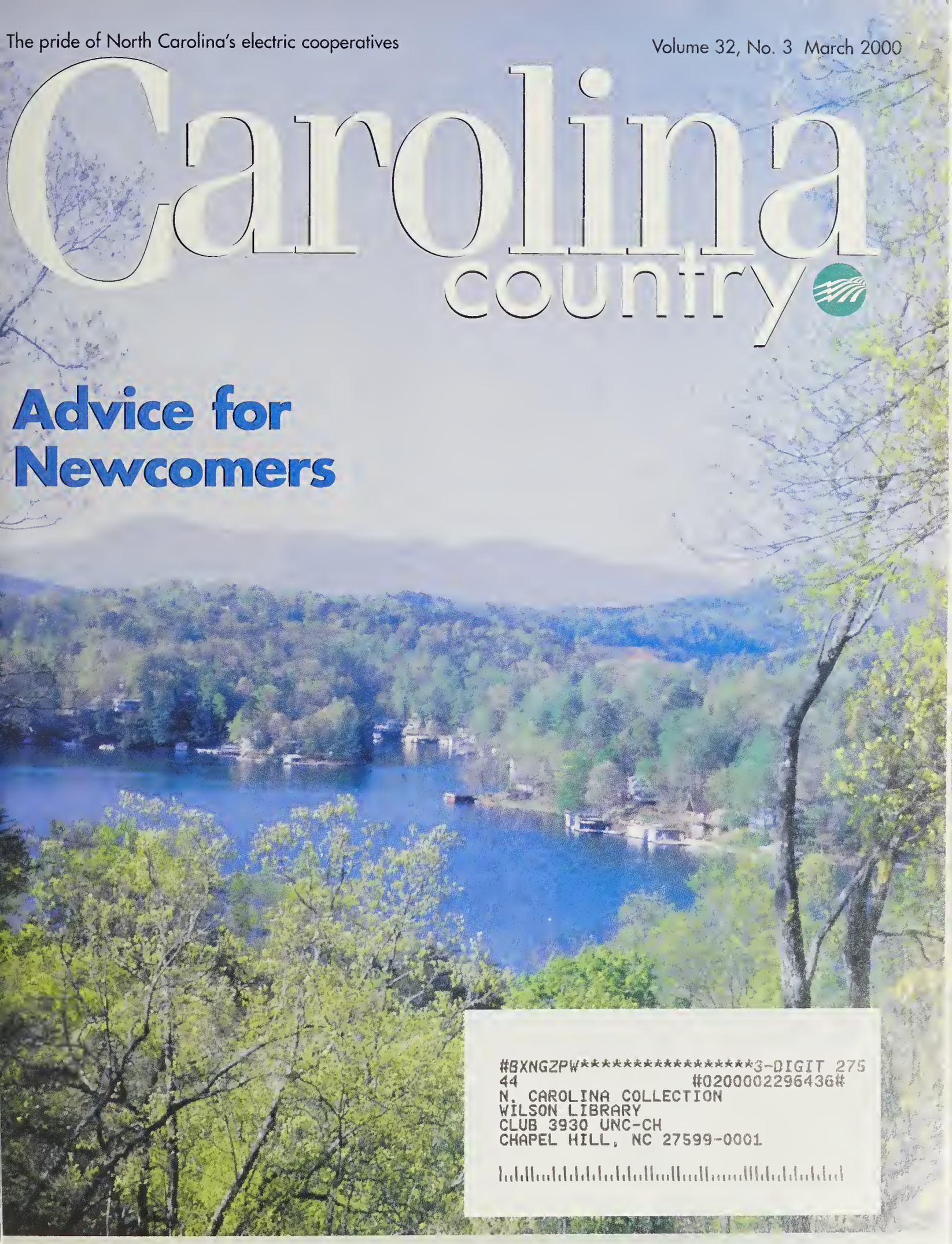
The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 32, No. 3 March 2000

Carolina country

Advice for Newcomers



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How to GROW small businesses in rural North Carolina — page 32

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Volume 32, No. 3, March 2000

CONTENTS

March

On the Cover

Lake Lure in early spring. Photography by Joseph Boyles of Gastonia.

Features

"What y'all need to know" 18
Your advice for newcomers to North Carolina, such as, "We rarely give turn signals" and "If the person in front of you doesn't get off the brake quick enough for you, don't lay on the horn."

Walk the walk and kiss the pig 24
How electric cooperatives support the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

What are fuel cells? 28
A primer on this emerging technology that can produce electricity cleanly in your backyard. *Not in all editions]*

How to grow businesses in rural North Carolina 32
"Incubators" use local and statewide resources to nurture small businesses. Plus: a listing of all the state's incubators.

Departments

MORE POWER TO YOU 6
"That miserable, blustery blizzard" of January 2000.. Carteret-Craven Electric donates land for a new statewide wetlands restoration program.

FIRST PERSON 12
A collection of your letters, pictures, questions, memories and humor. Plus: Is Owen Bishop really retiring?

CAROLINA CLOSE-UP 36
Places and programs for kids. Also: reenactment at Bentonville Battleground, postcards from America, free consumer information.

CAROLINA COMPASS 38
March events statewide.

JOYNER'S CORNER 41
Solving this puzzles could bring you $20.

MARKETPLACE 42
A showcase of goods and services.

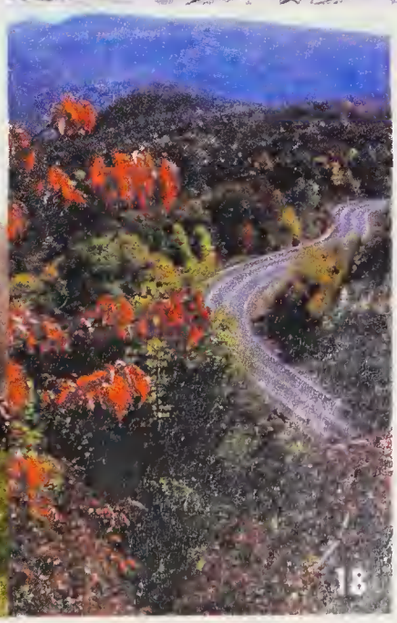
ONLINE 48
A device that gives easy access to the Internet.

ENERGY CENTS 50
All about electric radiant heat.

HANK'S GARDENING GUIDE . . .52
March advice, plus a recipe for prolonging the life of cut roses.

CLASSIFIED ADS 53

CAROLINA KITCHEN 54
An easy-to-fix feast for six.



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Editor
Michael E.C. Gery, *ext. 3062*

Associate Editor
Kim Whorton Tripp, CREC, *ext. 3134*

Assistant Editar
Renee C. Gannon, *ext. 3209*

Art Directar
Leisha L. Hodgson, *ext. 3090*

Business Coordinatar
Jenny Lloyd, *ext. 3091*

Advertising Manager
Jennifer Boedart Hoey, *ext. 3077*

Executive Vice President & CEO
Chuck Terrill

Seniar Vice President, Carporate Relations
Carolyn Herr Watts

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"That blustery, miserable blizzard"

The snow and ice of January 2000

Counties declared federal disaster areas:
The counties included in the federal disaster declaration as of January 31 are: Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Guilford, Halifax, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Moore, Nash, Northampton, Orange, Person, Randolph, Richmond, Rockingham, Scotland, Stanly, Union, Vance, Wake, and Warren.

North Carolina in January saw one winter storm after another roll into the state, bringing more snow and ice with each successive wave. The piedmont and foothills regions were especially hard hit from a January 23-25 blizzard whose intensity was not forecast.

Beginning late Sunday, January 23, a classic low pressure "nor'easter" formed off the coast of the Carolinas, whipping moisture into the bitter cold air hovering over the two states for almost 48 hours. Record snowfalls were reported across North Carolina, with as much as 20 inches dumped in some areas. The storm moved up the East Coast, leaving behind a beautiful, but dangerous landscape.

The "icing on the cake" came in the form of freezing rain January 29-30 in some areas, but problems from the prior snowstorm continued into the first days of February. Power had been restored, but North Carolinians were still dealing with school closings, impassable roads and some rivers reaching flood stage levels Down East.

Disaster areas

More than half of the state's counties reported snow or ice accumulation. Governor James Hunt declared a State of Emergency on Tuesday, January 25, and activated the National Guard to help with the clean up. At Hunt's request, President Clinton declared 31 of those counties federal disaster areas by the end of January (see list above). The declaration makes federal aid available to local governments. Hunt asked for the declaration to help deal with the estimated $24 million in state expenses from the storm ($15 million of which went to road clearing).

As for the economic impact the winter weather had on the state, the storm's ripple effects may be felt for months to come. According to Mike Walden, consumer economist for North Carolina State University (NCSU), the storm cost N.C. businesses about $164 million a day in lost sales and economic activity.

While scientists are concerned about effects that storm runoff may have had on the state's water quality, the agricultural economy did not see much of an impact from the winter storms.

Electric co-op members faced major outages

At the peak of the blizzard, 65,000 North Carolina electric co-op members were without power. By the Jan. 29-30 weekend, the outages were down to 3,500, just before the ice storm caused about 20,000 more outages.

Co-op crews from across the state, as well as from Georgia, Kentucky, Alabama and South Carolina, converged on those areas as soon as safely possible to restore power. Downed power lines, trees and impassable roads impeded their progress, delaying even longer the time it took to bring systems back on.

Tragic news reached the EnergyUnited offices when they learned that a crew member died while working the evening of January 30. A vehicle struck Neal Frady, 59, an equipment operator, as he worked with other co-op employees to restore power along the Old Wesley Chapel Road in western Davidson County. The outages in the area were caused by the ice storm January 29-30.

The co-ops sustained an estimated $9.1 million in damages to utility poles, lines and equipment. Many co-op employees described the hardest hit areas as looking like war zones.

Many families in rural areas were literally stuck – stuck in the snow, stuck at home, and stuck without power for days on end.

"It's especially grating when you see houses up the road with their lights on the last day or so, and you're sitting there in the dark and the cold," said one woman. She said she ventured outside one day when she saw a crew working in the area. "I had to ask them why we don't have power yet," airing the frustration of her whole neighborhood.

Co-op staff members who worked around-the-clock explained in local news and to consumers themselves as best they could about the difficulties in reaching downed lines and other problems, as well as how crews are dispatched to restore power. Anyone who is stranded without power for a period of time feels frustration followed by great relief when the lights come back on.

One Randolph EMC customer said: "We greatly appreciate the brave souls that risked life and limb in that blustery, miserable blizzard last night. It was unbelievable. ... I had just used my last log when the power was restored. Thanks for an incredible job."

A Union EMC customer said, "I know the crews were working long hours to get everyone back on line... Each time I spoke to someone in customer service I was pleasantly surprised at how courteous that person was...and we feel more reassured when we get a 'real person' as opposed to the computer simulated person."

Moore County was the most devastated area in the state. Some Pee Dee Electric members in the county were without power into the weekend. Despite the many frustrating, cold days without electricity, a few members wrote in their appreciation of the co-op's hard work. "I know the men working in the field had to endure bitter cold and much less than 'good' conditions in order to get the job done," said one member. "I also understand that those of you working in the offices had to endure some pretty 'nasty' customers. . . . I understand you had absolutely no control over the situation and that those in the offices were only there to field calls and answer questions."

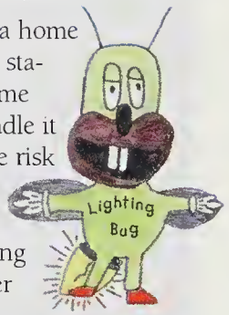
Judith and Bill Cox of New London even composed a poem for the EnergyUnited workers, including these lines: "The power was out all through the day/ But an EnergyUnited truck was coming our way/The driver waved as he went by/I said, 'Stop! Stop!' I wanted to cry."

— Renee Gannon and Michael E.C. Gery

Photos supplied by Randolph EMC and Union EMC.

Make your home office safe

Mr. Lighting Bug says:



If you're setting up a home office or computer work station, make sure your home electric circuitry can handle it safely. Before you run the risk of overloading circuits, damaging your valuable electronics or even causing an electrical fire, consider this advice from the National Electric Safety Foundation.

- Do you have enough outlets? Don't resort to a tangle of extension cords to hook up all your equipment. Use a safety-rated power strip or surge suppressor to connect and protect your computer, fax machine, copier and printer.
- Use grounded outlets. Many older homes may not have three-prong outlets to ensure that your equipment is safely grounded. An electrician can install grounded outlets where they're needed. Do not cut off the third prong to make the plug fit! You could be electrocuted.
- Don't overload the circuits. Check your breaker or fuse box to determine which outlets are on the same circuit, and be sure that all the equipment you have on a single circuit draws no more than 1,500 watts.
- In a lightning storm, unplug your computer directly from the wall outlet. A surge suppressor will not protect an electrical product from a lightning strike. Also, unplug and unhook your modem.
- If you lose power while working on your computer, turn the computer off. When the power comes back on, a voltage spike could damage your equipment.

LightLines
by Donna Hardy
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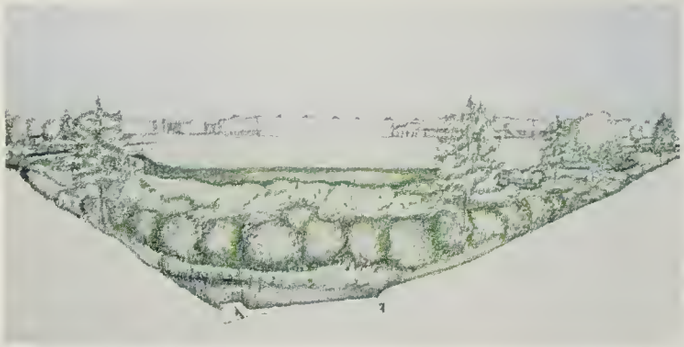

Illustration shows the Carteret-Craven Electric headquarters, and the wetland nearby.

Carteret-Craven's donation begins a new state Wetlands Restoration Program

Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative has donated the first plot of land for the new state Wetlands Restoration Program.

The 5-acre wetland is located within the Jumping Run Creek watershed on land that the co-op owns near its office outside Morehead City. The creek drains into a major shellfish area within the White Oak River Basin. Those shellfish waters have been subjected to bacterial pollution for a number of years, according to the N.C. State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Restoring wetlands is seen as a way to improve shellfish fisheries and re-open some that have been closed to fishing because of pollution. (Wetlands store and filter stormwater, for example.) The five acres in Carteret County will treat upstream drainage for more than a third of the basin's watershed. As a test site, it will be monitored for how effectively it operates to improve shellfish areas within the basin.

"We all need to do our part, and this is a great example of small business taking a leadership role in environmental restoration" says Nancy White, design extension specialist with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service at North Carolina State University.

White says this project will generate useful information on land-use management strategies that will protect aquatic resources. The main objectives of the project are to measure the effects that a change in land use has on shellfish areas, and to determine ways to deflect those effects.

White says that just as important as the science connected with this project, is the multi-disciplinary, multi-agency approach involved. At the university level, North Carolina State University's School of Design, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering and Duke University's School of the Environment will each have roles in the project. The North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and North Carolina Sea Grant are also participating.

At the state level, the project involves the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Division of Water Quality, and Division of Environmental Health – Shellfish Sanitation Program.

Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative scheduled a March 9 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the project. It will be held at 9 a.m. on the grounds of the restoration site on Highway 24 West, between Newport and Morehead City.

NCEMC is one of the nation's top 100 co-ops

Cooperative businesses are reaching new heights, according to Charles E. Snyder, president and CEO of the National Cooperative Bank, based in Washington, D.C.

In a recent news release, Snyder said, "Within a soaring economic climate, cooperatives are helping communities keep businesses local, allowing independent owners to compete, and providing quality goods and services at competitive prices."

Snyder also unveiled the annual The NCB Co-op 100®, launched in 1992 to draw attention to the contributions of co-ops to the U.S. economy. Since 1993, the annual revenues of co-ops in the Top 100 have increased by 29 percent; this year's Top 100, representing seven business sectors, generated more than $122 billion in revenue.

Eleven electric co-ops retained their presence in the Top 100, with combined revenues of nearly $6 billion. Oglethorpe Power Corp., Tucker, Ga., 28th, again led electric co-ops, followed by Basin Electric Power Co-op, Bismarck, N.D. (42nd); North Carolina Electric Membership Corp. (NCEMC) in Raleigh (53rd); Associated Electric Co-op, Springfield, Mo. (60th) and Seminole Electric Co-op, Tampa, Fla. (65th).

NCEMC is the power supply cooperative for the state's electric cooperatives.

Agricultural and grocery co-ops dominated the Top 100 again, with 61 slots, led by Farmland Industries of Kansas City, Mo., with nearly $9 billion in revenue.

Other co-ops represented health care; hardware and lumber; media; and recreation. Nationwide, more than 48,000 co-ops generate more than $150 billion in economic activity. — *Mike Sorohan, Electric Co-op TODAY*

Cooperatives are seen as well suited to today's marketplace

Is the cooperative structure still a viable business model in today's marketplace?

That was the question posed by the East Kentucky Power Cooperative in a survey of 10 successful non-cooperative businesses across the nation.

The study questioned key staff members in businesses whose market characteristics are similar to those facing a deregulated electric industry. They included the following cooperatives: Nationwide Insurance, Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative, People's Rural Telephone, Duo County Telephone, Southern States, Land O'Lakes, Ocean Spray, Sunkist, and Dairy Farmers of America.

The study drew four conclusions, as reported by the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation.

- Cooperative models can thrive in competitive markets because of their unique ownership, ability to serve various size markets well, excellent brand identity, legislative influence, or close ties to customers.
- Successful co-ops adapt quickly to changes in the business environment.
- Successful co-ops stick to their core business, but also form partnerships and alliances, and they develop related goods and services. This produces additional revenues and reduces market risk.
- Competition reshapes the internal culture of co-ops to put much more e mphasis on the customer.

The study's authors write that "Successful co-ops seem to understand the business world as well as their cooperative culture. This is the challenge that co-ops entering competitive environments have to face. The way they bridge the gap between the old world and the new world will define who survives. Our survey shows that many co-ops have bridged the gap extremely well. They knew exactly what their co-op advantage was and how to use it to their benefit."

An inspiring tribute to the most Blessed Mother.

Our Lady of the Rosary

Precious Rosary Beads Included

Sculpture shown approximately actual size of 5½" (13.97 cm) in height. Rosary beads are 18" (45.72 cm) in length.

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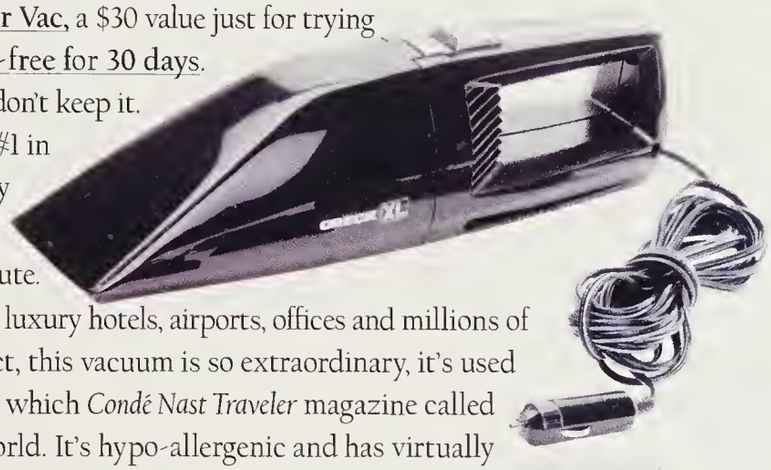

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first person

From our readers

"Keep up the great spirit and attitude"

Eddie Hough, a physically disabled man in Randolph County who sent us some of his photographs recently and told us how he has taught himself photography, typing and other skills ["Commentary," December 1999], has himself received letters from Carolina Country readers who encouraged him. He sent us this one.

Dear Eddie.

I am a stranger friend of yours. We have never met, but I wish we had.

I read your letter and saw your photograph in the December issue of the Carolina Country magazine published by the N.C. electric cooperatives.

I am very impressed with what you have done with your life and what you have accomplished. You should be very proud of yourself. Keep up the great spirit and attitude.

I am 52 years old and have a severe hearing loss from birth, but I have lip-read all my life and was raised as a normal hearing child. I graduated from college with a Bachelor of Arts degree and became the mother of five children, four sons and one daughter, ages now almost 30, almost 27, 18, almost 15 and 9.

I was intrigued by your letter mainly because I have struggled with some hard school courses, and I experience a few frustrating incidents every now and then with my handicap. There are so many young people today who are wasting their talents and abilities because they feel they don't have to or they can do it later. It seems like they don't care about pride or accomplishing something for themselves. They think money will get them anywhere, yet they don't want to work.

I wish you the very best of luck in your life and much happiness always.

Janice P. Miller
267 Nixon St.
Hertford, NC 27944

Eddie Hough also sent us this photo of the Pisgah Covered Bridge in Randolph County just after the January 24 snow. He used his old Pentax Spotomatic and a 24 mm lens. "I am glad the state took over the Pisgah Bridge and will preserve it for posterity," he said. (Eddie Hough, 4683, Robbins Circle, Asheboro, NC 27203-2852)

How to Reach Us

Mail:	*P.O. Box 27306* *Raleigh, NC 27611-7306*
Phone:	*(800) 662-8835, ext. 3062*
Fax:	*(919) 878-3970*
E-mail:	*carolina.country@ncemcs.com*
Web site:	*www.carolinacountry.com*

Fixing Corky's sweater

My husband and I enjoy your magazine, and we love working on our Ashe County land. Some day we will call it home.

We don't mind working in the cold, but our little dog, Corky, prefers the warmer months. One chilly December Saturday, Corky kept on wiggling out of her sweater, so my husband made some quick adjustments with duct tape and solved the problem.

Just further evidence, I suppose, that a man (or woman) can fix most anything with a little duct tape.

Keren Wheeler
Rutherfordton

Washed away

Photographer Gerald Yokely, of Tobaccoville, whose photographs of barns after a light snowfall appeared in our January issue, sent us this letter he received from a reader.

I would like to know how I could get copies of your pictures of barns in the Carolina Country. I collect barn pictures, but we were flooded out in September, and I lost most of my pictures to water. We live on the Neuse River in Goldsboro, Wayne County. It almost washed us away. We are going to have to move. We are on six acres and we can only find a half-acre lot. We have been here 35 years. It is home. My husband and I are getting old. He is 75 and I am 68. We just can't handle the water anymore.

Please help me to get the right place to get the pictures. I just love them. Real pretty. Barns have a special place in my heart. Thank you.

Anne Games
1282 Stevens Mill Rd.
Goldsboro, NC 27530

Still sending inspiration

I thought you might enjoy this piece I call "Spring Says Hello."

I grew up in the Marion, N.C., area on a farm. I attended Pfeiffer Junior College, now Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer, N.C. I graduated from Asheville College, which is now out of existence. I am a retired teacher from the Baltimore City Public Schools where I had a rich and rewarding career of 42 years.

Now I spend some of my time writing notes, letters and sending educational materials to students, teachers and individuals involved in education. My hometown paper, The McDowell News, features a student each week. I try to write to them.

Frances M. Gleichmann
10 Dungarrie Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21228

Spring Says Hello

Nature is embroidering the countryside with fresh new designs and spreading a bright green shawl around the mountains' shoulders. Robins are hopping here and there looking for a juicy morsel, while up in the holly tree the cardinal flashes its red feathers. The tiny colorful crocuses are peeping around the spacious lawn, looking for the faces of their little friends, the yellow daffodils.

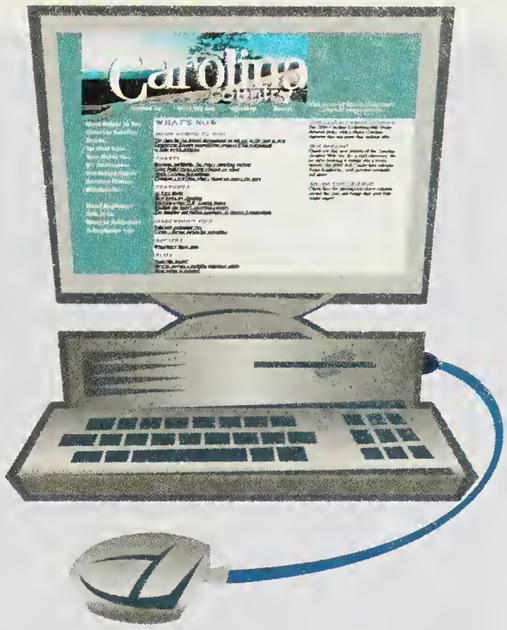
The forsythia bush is proudly wearing its dress of bell-shaped flowers, competing with the soft gray blooms on the swaying pussy willow. Apple trees are bursting into beautiful pink and white blossoms, inviting the honeybees to come and feast on the sweet nectar.

In the nearby pasture, newborn lambs are trying out their wobbly legs, while the faithful farmer enjoys plowing the sleeping brown earth. Little spring peepers are piping their chorus to all who will listen, as evening shadows creep slowly over the hills and quiet meadows.

All are saying a fond hello and welcome to spring's new beauty, thus bringing a new season to fill our hearts with joy and gladness.

— Frances M. Gleichmann

Thanks for the Web version



I am glad that you are making the magazine available on the Web. Our print edition did not have the article, "We picked and sang our way" by Al Wall [January 2000]. The article about country and bluegrass music is of great interest to us here in the mountains.

We enjoy the magazine, particularly the schedule of events for the state, since we visit both in the Piedmont and the Coast.

Dave Mathewes
Canton

Editor's Note: The version of Carolina Country that Mr. Mathewes receives contains local news pages prepared by Haywood EMC, his electric cooperative. Many co-ops use the magazine's center pages in that way. The articles that do not appear in the local versions are on our Web site at www.carolinacountry.com

"This is a true story!"

Nice dress

A minister friend of mine who had a church in Nash County told me that one day in church he saw a little girl dressed very nicely, and he said to her, "Well, Laurie, that sure is a nice crinoline dress you're wearing today." The girl replied, "Yeah, but my Mom says it's a b*&^# to iron."

Charles Joyner
Hendersonville

What flavor is snow cream?

My three grandchildren spent the night with me, and before going to bed they were wishing it would snow so they could have some snow cream.

The next morning we woke up, and it had snowed. I called them to ask if they wanted some vanilla snow cream or chocolate.

My oldest granddaughter looked at me and said, "Grandma, you know it doesn't snow chocolate snow!"

Edith Perry
Youngsville

first person

All about acrylic windows

Regarding James Dulley's "Energy Cents" column on interior storm windows [January 2000], the author's description of acrylic plastics is not only misleading to the reader but absolutely wrong. "Acrylic is a clear plastic and does yellow over time like other plastics . . . and naturally blocks nearly all the sun's fading ultraviolet (UV) rays."

Acrylic resin sheets have the highest resistance to yellowing of all the commercially available plastics. The acrylic plastics do not block ultraviolet (UV) radiation, in fact they are used in installations where such radiation is desirable.

If one checks the literature, one will find that the UV transmission of acrylic sheet averages 92 percent. Acrylic is much more transparent to UV than window glass. On yellowing, published data indicates that acrylic sheets will lose less than 1 percent of their transparency in five years of outdoor exposure.

If one wishes to keep interior furnishings from fading, acrylic glazing would be the worst choice.

Raymond J. Schutz, FACI, FASTM
Marion

James Dulley replies:

Although acrylic plastic does have a higher resistance to yellowing than some other clear plastics, like supertough polycarbonate, (this is why I referred to acrylic as "crystal clear"), all plastics do yellow to some extent over time. I made mention of this yellowing in the column so that people do not think that it will stay as real glass with many years of exposure to sunlight, indoor air pollution, cleaning chemicals, etc.

As for the ultraviolet (UV) light transmission through acrylic, it varies depending on the type of acrylic material used for the storm window glazing. There is not just one type of "acrylic" plastic material, just like there is not just one type of "steel" material. Acrylic can be formulated in many different ways with various additives. It can be formulated to block much of the UV light (this type is used in storm windows), and it can also be formulated to block very little UV light for other applications. The UV3 type (all of the major acrylic plastic sheet manufacturers produce this) is available in many levels of ultraviolet light protection.

For example, a zoo or botanical garden often selects a acrylic that allows UV light to pass through for the animals and plants. Museums, commercial buildings and residential storm windows use an acrylic with UV blockers to protect the interior contents.

Old ways of telling what weather is coming

I would like to see reader/members send in their old wives tales regarding weather, such as "thunder in the winter means it will snow within nine days." *[That very event happened during the week of Jan. 16, 2000].*

Another is: "If there is a ring around the moon, the number of stars inside the ring will be the number of days until it snows."
Another is: "When the wind blows and you can see the underside of the leaves on a tree, rain is coming."

Ravonda Hanes
Randolph EMC

Editor's Note: Send us your tried and true adages or tales by mail or e-mail. Or call them in.

Home Remedies

Don't mix ammonia and bleach

I would like to send a comment about the section called "Home Remedies" in the February issue. "To clean very dirty work clothes, add 1/2 cup household ammonia to your wash water."

If a person mixes ammonia with bleach it can create a chlorine gas. This combination of chemicals can seriously harm if not kill a person. Since many people would add bleach to dirty work clothes in order to get them clean, I believe the possibility of this combination would be likely by your readers, and many of them may not know about the dangers of combining the chemicals and what the effects could be.

I like reading Carolina Country and look forward to it coming in the mail.

Robert E. Dickerson
Huntersville

One air freshener too many

Adding an air freshener to a ceiling fan ["Home Remedies," February 2000] will pre-maturely wear out the motor bearings due to imbalance. Installers take time and effort to properly balance the blades, which will be thrown off by adding an air freshener and put a strain on the motor bearings. If you must do this, try adding one on each blade, as close as possible to the motor end. This will minimize any balance issues.

John Dackow
Mocksville

The value system

Has Owen Bishop really retired?

By Michael E.C. Gery

At a farewell reception honoring his retirement this winter, Owen Bishop did what he's done so often and so well: he placed the moment in historical perspective, then he quoted a writer he admires. (And he choked a little while doing it, because Owen can reveal his emotions often and well, too, even though he thinks he can't.)

I've worked with Owen Bishop here at the statewide association of electric cooperatives for eight years. As editor of Carolina Country, he hired me to help put out this magazine and everything else we publish. Over the years, I've noticed his editorial way of bringing history to a subject, then quoting someone, often a writer, but also ministers, artists, managers, and readers of this magazine. I've figured out that it comes from a style of journalism that's not as prevalent as it once was. It's a style where the writer or editor remains objective, delivers information and ideas, yet still expresses a point or feeling. Owen is really good at that. His Carolina Country columns since the early 1970s would tell us about something he found that he thought we would enjoy: names for pets, advice for parents, how to console a person in mourning, funny phrases, an especially perfect prayer.

From all those columns – and there were more than 200 of them – regular readers could detect a lot about Owen's personality, even if it were between the lines. (Look out, though. He's thinking of publishing some of those columns in a book.)

For the rest of you, I'll summarize the man and will quote him this time.

His first name is Bertram. Owen is his middle name. He grew up in Plymouth ("I was a townie") but his father's family was good country people and co-op members in Beaufort County not far away. He hoped to be a writer ever since his mother let him play on her typewriter in the Ag Experiment Station in Roper. He worked for the Roanoke Beacon newspaper the summer before he entered the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where studied journalism and was graduated in 1963.

He's been a Chapel Hill sort of person ever since then: worships legendary UNC professors, met Cynthia there and married her, lived there after college and wrote for the Durham newspaper, worked briefly in Virginia but hated it and headed straight back to the Durham Sun, worked for the UNC-Greensboro news bureau.

After Cynthia got her doctorate, the Bishops came to Raleigh and Owen was hired in 1973 as associate editor and advertising manager for the Carolina Farmer, as it was called then. Jim Cheney, the magazine's editor, taught Owen plenty in 16 months, he says, before health problems forced him to retire, leaving Owen in charge. "Jim Cheney was totally devoted to the cause we are involved in. That's one thing I learned from him."

A stylish Owen Bishop inspects the May 1976 issue of Carolina Country as it runs through the press,

For 20 years, Owen carried the magazine not only through momentous changes in publishing technology, but also through changes among the cooperatives and their state association.

"Our mission always has been to support the co-ops in their efforts to educate and inform their members and the general public. That is an obligation of cooperatives. What happens is that the nature of the membership goes through changes. We began losing the allegiance of the people who turned the lights on. So those of us in communications had to raise the level of what we were doing to inform a different consumer."

He also saw a transformation among the co-op employees charged with communications. "When I began, most of them were not communicators by training. They were 'electrification advisers,' trying to interest people in refrigerators. Today we have very talented and capable professionals in the co-ops involved in communications.. . . And communication now has the attention of management that it never really had before. That is a very positive development."

Once you're in this business for a while, the idea of supporting consumer-owned cooperatives becomes something of a crusade. It certainly has lodged itself in Owen Bishop's vision. "I just got caught up in it to the point where it's not just a job. This is a cause. The self-help concept, the democratic process of running a business and a service that does not rely on the capitalists. And we shouldn't forget that. We should be proud of that heritage. But we can't operate as if that is enough. Especially now. The hardest part of getting through these times now may be holding on to the best of the cooperative spirit. We do not serve just customers. They are members, too. These organizations belong to them. . . . The nature of the beast is changing. And that keeps it interesting! . . In our organizations, you feel that there is a value system that you won't find in other businesses. And the opportunity is there to build on those values."

Owen served in leadership positions with the national association of electric cooperative statewide editors, and under his editorship Carolina Country's 1993 volume won the national Haggard Award for Excellence in Journalism. Then he was asked to coordinate the statewide Bright Ideas Grants for public school teachers. That program not only was "a perfect fit for my interests, something that really sparked me," but has become one of the most successful community services the co-ops and their state association offer.

The truth is, Owen has one of the kindest hearts you'll ever encounter. Even though Owen's real love is his wife and daughters, Cynthia, Melissa and Ellen (he would come around regularly reporting news of their achievements while trying to sell us the citrus fruits his girls were supposed to sell), he says that he'd rather be writing, especially if he can do it for the cooperatives.

If you'd like to give Owen Bishop a piece of your mind (that he may quote later), you can reach him at 117 Forest Rd., Raleigh, NC 27605. E-mail: owenbishop@touchtnc.net

If you can remember the aroma of
homemade bread fresh from the oven...
slathered with sweet homemade butter and jam
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What y'all need to know if y'all are fixin' to move here

Advice for newcomers to North Carolina

What is your advice to newcomers to North Carolina? The top nuggets of advice seem to be: slow down, enjoy the scenery and, above all else, be friendly. It's not surprising. We're a hospitable people if nothing else.

As a North Carolina native, I welcome our newly transplanted North Carolinians, but I find myself bristling at suggestions that we talk funny, that things here are just too slow and that we can't really drive in the snow. Well, maybe we can't drive in the snow (I can't), but the rest of it is just part of the culture, beauty and charm of our southern state. We wouldn't have it any other way. No matter where you've lived in the past, if you find your new home in North Carolina, then you're sure to find wisdom here in these words from our readers — from both natives and transplants.

Thanks to all those who wrote or e-mailed us. Next month we will run your accounts of "The Funniest Story I Ever Heard." Deadline was Feb. 15. For the other themes of 2000 see page 22.

Ya'll come see us.

— Kim Whorton Tripp

Slow down

I am a native New Jersey girl who has lived in North Carolina for three years. I admit it took me some time to get used to not having restaurants (including delivery service for different foods), malls and other conveniences at my fingertips. Now I couldn't imagine raising my three children anywhere else. I think there is a natural sedative in the air that makes one more relaxed here.

The finest advice for newcomers to North Carolina is relax. Slow down. These are the nicest people on the face of God's beautiful earth. If you are hungry they will feed you; if you are scared they will comfort you; if you are sad they will cheer you; if you don't know God they will introduce you; and they will always make you feel loved.

Take advantage of the beauty of this wonderful state. It is endless and breathtaking. Every day it is a joy to wake up and breathe this fresh country air.

Candy Macaluso
Pikeville
Pitt & Greene EMC member

Join the community

My husband and I retired to the Tar Heel State seven years ago. North Carolina's natural resources drew us here originally. Who could resist the beautiful mountains, lakes and beaches?

However, what really made the decision easy was the friendly people. When you leave family and friends behind, it's important to be able to find new friends in the area and feel accepted. On one visit we attended a local church (talk about friendly!), and it was like worshipping there all our lives. I found out first-hand how important it is to have an extended church family when my husband suffered a stroke a few years ago. North Carolinians sure do practice their faith in wonderful ways.

As a newcomer, join a community service organization. Use your talents to work with a charitable or civic-minded group. This will promote enduring friendships. You will find out what a small world we live in when mutual acquaintances appear out of nowhere.

If you become a helpful, hospitable person when moving here, you will have no problem adjusting and finding people in kind. Whoever said, "People are their best natural resource," surely had North Carolina in mind.

Marilyn Lietzke
Statesville
EnergyUnited member

Learn the language, make the choices

Growing up as an army brat whose family always returned to eastern North Carolina and treated it as "home base," I learned at an early age some significant characteristics of North Carolinians. Newcomers to the state might find life is finer when they accept or even incorporate some of these traits. For instance, I noticed that water is pronounced "warder" in most parts of this state, and that the word "reckon" is used more frequently here than in most other places. Perhaps, a newcomer who finds it difficult to change his pronunciation of water might throw in a "reckon" here and there.

Also, newcomers should make some important decisions so they will be able to participate in local conversations. They should pick between the beach and the mountains for a favorite vacation spot; among N.C. State, Wake Forest, Carolina, and Duke for a favorite ACC team; and between eastern or western recipes for a favorite style of barbecue. Newcomers should also learn how many of the people in the community are related.

Finally, all newcomers should know that a friendly "hello" is valued here, and that native sons and daughters would rather inherit the land than stocks or jewels.

GeorGia Longest
Wallace
Four County EMC member

Learn to love NASCAR, wrestling, Dean Smith and driving

I moved here 10 years ago and haven't looked back. I have some advice to newcomers that may make them a little more comfortable.

1. *Like NASCAR. We take it serious and we love those drivers.*
2. *Learn to like wrestling. It's all we talk about the next day at work.*
3. *Go to the mountains. The Blue Ridge Parkway is the best drive to take when the leaves are changing in the fall, fabulous.*
4. *Remember that Dean Smith is DA-Man, and watch what you say about him.*
5. *Go to the North Carolina coast. It is a beautiful place to be.*

Kevin Hyde
Denver
EnergyUnited member

Look around

Be prepared for generally mild winters, colorful autumns, beautiful spring times, and long summers. A 2-inch snow in the Piedmont will have everything at a standstill for at least two days. Hurry to the store for bread and milk, before the locals beat you to it.

Where is the most beautiful part of North Carolina? I don't believe there is one part more picturesque than another. I am partial to the Piedmont section. In about an hour and half you can be snow skiing. Or in just over two hours you can be lying on one of our sunny beaches.

This is also NASCAR country. No matter where you are, the subject is going to come up. With Lowe's Motor Speedway in Charlotte, Rockingham Motor Speedway, and Bristol Speedway, so close by, you can't help but get caught up in race fever. Of course the Carolina Panthers and the Charlotte Hornets have their fans, too.

No matter what you're into, you'll be able to enjoy it here. Just get out and drive from the mountains to the sea. That's the best way to acquaint yourself with North Carolina. You'll see why we like "Calling North Carolina Home."

David A. Dellinger
Crouse
Rutherford EMC member

Choose a North Carolina ACC team with the same care you'd choose a spouse, because it's a passionate, life-long relationship.

Brag on us

If you're not from around here, consider these things when making your home in North Carolina:

1. *In the country, people wave to everyone—whether they know you or not.*
2. *Don't be offended when you're asked, "Where are you from?" We can tell you're not from around here.*
3. *Feel free to brag on our pies and cakes. We'll give you the recipes.*
4. *When in a restaurant, specify whether you want "iced tea" (sweetened or unsweetened), or "hot tea." If you don't ask, you'll get sweet iced tea.*
5. *Ask your neighbor to borrow anything he has. Just make sure you return it.*
6. *If we ask you to have something to eat or to stay for supper, we mean it.*
7. *Don't say anything unkind about some one else to another person—the two are probably kin.*
8. *Watch out for tractors pulling tobacco wagons in the summer and hunters in the winter. We sort of think the back roads belong to us.*
9. *Slow down a bit and go the speed limit in our small towns. Speeding tickets help fund the police department.*
10. *Get used to pig pickin's! We're known for them.*

Martha Harper
Zebulon
Wake EMC member

Tawk the tawk

If you're moving to North Carolina, the first thing to remember is that "y'all" is plural. Never use "y'all" when talking to just one person because that person will keep looking over his or her shoulder to see if someone else is there. "You" is the proper pronoun when addressing one person. "Y'all" is used when addressing two or more people.

Also, you can insult anyone and get away with it as long as you remember to add, "bless his/her heart." For example, "He's so dumb, bless his heart," or "She's so silly, bless her heart."

Don't mistake dead 'possums in the road for armadillos. I say this because I had a husband from Texas once who kept mistaking 'possums for armadillos. We don't have armadillos in North Carolina, but we have been well blessed with 'possums.

If you need some help unloading the refrigerator and can't remember Billy Bob's name next door, just yell, "Hey, Bubba!" It works just as well most of the time, as long as it's used in a friendly tone.

It might also be helpful to know that apple, peach, and blackberry dumplings are not the same as apple, peach, and blackberry cobbler. Cobbler is baked in a casserole dish in the oven; dumplings are boiled in a pot on top of the stove, and then dumped into a large bowl.

Oh, just one more thing. Children are not "kids." Kids are young goats. Although the use of the word "kids" when referring to children is used more and more (my 13-year-old son can be so hardheaded that I sometimes feel like I'm dealing with a goat), the word still predominantly used is "young'un." Or, when referring to more than one you might say, "These young'uns are driving me crazy!"

Karen Hammer
Pinehurst
Randolph EMC member

Get used to it

OK, I'll admit it; I'm not from here. I came here from Connecticut three years ago, and I have some advice for other Yankees seeking the good country life.

When the cashier at the grocery store finds out you're from the North and starts to tell you about her cousin's uncle's brother's neighbor who went to New York City in 1962 (or was it 1963?), smile. You are an outsider. This is how people relate to you. Get used to it.

When you take a walk down your street, folks will drive by and wave to you. Wave back. That's how life is here; people are friendly. Just accept it.

At the end of a long, hard day at the office, go sit on your porch swing (if you don't have one, get one). Sip some sweet iced tea and watch the sunset. You know why? Because down here you can.

RoseAnne Sanders
Huntersville
EnergyUnited member

Know where you're going

Newcomers to North Carolina need to know that we North Carolinians have rules and customs that are so ingrained in our society that they have become a way of life.

Such as the fact that we rarely give turn signals. We know where we're going whether you do or not.

And, if our car or truck happens to break down, we put a rag in the door handle (preferably boxer shorts) to let passersby know that we've had a mechanical failure, not a wreck. Sometimes, with our vehicles, it's hard to tell whether it's a wreck or not.

If you order tea in our restaurants, you'll likely get the iced version with lots of sugar. There are a couple of places left that don't serve sweet tea, but they will probably be outlawed by this year's General Assembly.

If you really want to get on our good side, talk to us about the weather. We dearly love to talk about the weather. If there's rain in sight, we can tell you about it. Just don't make fun of our drawl, ya'll.

Warren Dixon Jr.
Liberty
Randolph EMC member

Respect us, please

I have lived in North Carolina most all of my 45 years. I wasn't born here, but I have always called it home. The people here are good, honest and hard working. They mean what they say, and say what they mean.

The negative people I have encountered turned out to be from other states. They knock us for our country way of doing things, like the way we drive in the snow (or the way we do not drive in the snow), and they enjoy telling us how they did things in New York or Kansas. This is North Carolina, folks!

So what would I tell newcomers is, welcome. I hope you will make North Carolina home, but don't try to change us, or tell us your way is better. Just blend in, make friends, and we all will get along fine. I will not bore you with stories about how much better I can drive, if you do not bore me with yours. I will put out the welcome mat, invite you to dinner, share homemade ice cream and call you friend. I only ask you show me the same respect.

Donna Kale
Sherrills Ford
EnergyUnited member

Get familiar

Newcomers in search of simplified lifestyles and beautiful natural surroundings may feel like they've moved to a foreign country. Don't despair. All you need to do is get acquainted. Take a deep breath and smile. Attending church is a wonderful way to meet friendly people. Put your kids in a little league. Ask a librarian for historical books about your new hometown. Evening walks are perfect opportunities to encounter neighbors. With a good smile, ask what we plant in our yards. Share recipes. "Familiar" will eventually replace the word "stranger."

Please understand that we're overwhelmed by the amount of growth in our state. We promise not to shoot or sic the dog on you; that's really not our way. Forgive us if we can't understand why you don't like grits. Don't try to change us or make fun of our accents and music until you get to know us better, because proud roots run deep. Give us time to know you, and be patient as you learn about us.

One day you'll realize that we've grafted you into our community. You'll start putting down roots. For my neighbors, it'll be in the red clay. It gets in your carpet, gums up your shoes, and turns slick when it rains, but don't worry. My dad says it'll grow anything. I guess that's why so many are deciding to raise their children here.

Sharon Archer
Mooresville

Accept our pride

You're moving to North Carolina? Congratulations! We, who have the good fortune to be natives, welcome you to what we sincerely believe to be one of, if not THE best place to live on the face of the earth.

I believe the single most important thing to be aware of as you make this move is the pride of North Carolina people. We are proud of our land, our heritage, our people. We believe in ourselves and in our neighbors.

I've seen people move here with a condescending attitude. The kind of attitude that means they think they've taken a step down by moving here. Don't believe for single minute we can't tell. North Carolina people are more than proud — we're smart. We spot someone who "looks down" on us a mile away. Treat us and ours with respect. We deserve it.

Our cue comes from you. If you are respectful, friendly, interested in getting to know us and sharing our lives, we will welcome you with open arms and hearts. We'll respect where you came from as you respect where you are.

Ellen Brooks
Glade Valley
Blue Ridge EMC member

Do unto others

I live in Vale, a rural part of North Carolina that borders on the foothills. Most of the folks here are direct descendents of original settlers. These people have accepted us, treated us as friends, and helped us. Some tips for fellow "Yankees" are as follows:

1. *Never insult folks by commenting on how good things are Up North. Remember the Golden Rule. How would you like a southerner to settle where you're from and comment in a similar fashion?*
2. *North Carolina history is as old as our history. Tasks here are performed as they were passed down through the generations. You may do things differently, but you are not in the North anymore. When in Rome, do as the Romans!*
3. *When conversing, try listening more than talking. Understand the entire conversation before making a statement. We have a tendency to overpower a conversation.*

I've followed my own advice since 1991, and it has worked for me. Frequently I hear, "You're a pretty good ole boy for a Yankee." I take that as a compliment.

Mark Riddle & family
Vale
Rutherford EMC member

Find the heart

1. *Baltimore and Boston are considered to be the same place. Likewise Michigan and Minnesota. In short, anyplace north of Danville, Virginia is "Up North." That's where you're FROM. (If you're from "Out West", we're not sure what to think of you.)*
2. *Learn to love barbecue, or at least learn to say, "whole hog is better than just shoulders." And, I hope this goes without saying, the word "barbecue" is a noun referring to a cooked pig. Period. End of story.*
3. *When you serve cake, serve pickles along side it. Peanuts are to be poured into Pepsi (preferably in a returnable glass bottle.) When you cook collards, cook a mess of them.*
4. *Learn the fine nuances of the language. If a house is in disarray, it is "tore up." If it is "tore down," it has been leveled.*
5. *"What does your daddy do?" is an important question – no matter your age.*
6. *End all conversations with "Come see us" and you'll be accepted. (Don't worry – it's just an expression. No one is likely to really drop in unexpected.)*
7. *Take the back roads. When you come across a sign that says "Pavement Ends," keep going. That's where you may find the heart of your new home.*

Candace W. Tippett
Granite Falls
Blue Ridge EMC member

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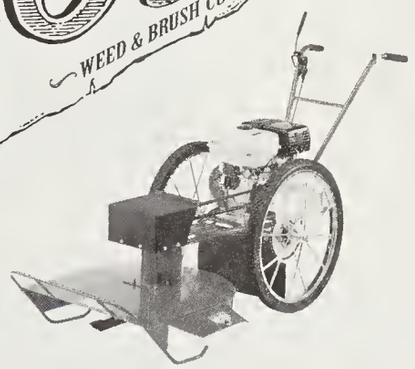

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Whether you walk the walk, or kiss the pig, you're helping to fight cancer

Electric co-ops and the annual Relay for Life

Cooperatives do more than just provide their members with reliable electric power and other services. They are an integral part of the communities they serve, providing scholarships for young people and donating time and money to local charities.

One cause that has found a friend in North Carolina's electric cooperatives is the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. Relay for Life is a unique fund-raising event that allows participants from all walks of life, including patients, medical support staff, corporations, churches and community volunteers to join in the fight against cancer. It is an overnight event where teams of volunteers walk a track for 24 hours and take pledges to raise money. Creative fundraisers accompany the walk, such as bake sales, car washes, barbecue dinners, yard sales and, at one co-op, a pig-kissing contest. This national event, which is implemented locally in most counties, mobilizes communities throughout the country to remember loved ones who fought cancer and to raise money for the continuing fight against the disease. It is the signature event of the American Cancer Society.

"I don't think there's anybody who can say that cancer hasn't affected them in some way," said Diane Sturges, billing and capital credits clerk for Halifax EMC. Sturges also serves as team leader for the co-op's Relay for Life fundraising efforts. "Whether it's someone in your family or your friend, everyone knows someone who has battled cancer."

This sentiment rings true across the board. Judy Raby, work management director and Relay for Life team leader for Blue Ridge EMC, lost her mother to cancer on the very day of last year's Relay for Life walk in Caldwell County. She has continued her work with Relay for Life.

"We're so lucky if we're healthy that we should do everything we can to help," Raby said. "I feel a lot of gratitude to all the people who work so hard to raise money to fight cancer."

Her co-workers, Peggy Helton and Nadine Rogers each volunteer for Relay for Life. Peggy serves as committee chair for Caldwell County and Nadine serves as committee chair for team recruitment in Caldwell County. Both have seen their share of cancer. Peggy lost her brother to the disease; Nadine lost her father.

"I don't mind giving my time at all," Rogers said. "It's the least I can do. It brings our county together, it's good for Blue Ridge EMC, it's good for the community, it's fun and it's for a good cause. We're hoping to raise even more money this year."

Each county and each fundraising team approaches Relay for Life differently, although there are some guidelines. Each team should be composed of no less than 10 members, with each member raising $100 as a goal. No group is ever too small to participate, no donation too small to accept. At each walk, the first lap is called a "survivor's lap," where people who have survived cancer as well as those who are currently fighting it take a lap around the track. Throughout the day, luminaries are sold for $10. At dusk, the luminaries are lit in memory of or in honor of loved ones. By all accounts, it's a moving, inspiring event.

Not only is the Relay For Life fun and inspirational, it raises millions of dollars to fund the American Cancer Society's programs in research, education, and patient services. Relay For Life reminds people that progress has been made in the fight against cancer and that everyone who participates or contributes is making a difference.

Halifax EMC in Enfield serves as a corporate sponsor for Relay for Life in Halifax County. In 1999, the co-op sold food and baked goods, held raffles, took donations and pledges and raised $4,500. Their support helped make Halifax County the fourth-highest fundraising county per capita in the nation.

Roanoke Electric Cooperative in Rich Square supports the Bertie County Relay for Life. Bertie County was the second-highest fundraising county per capita in the nation.

Union EMC in Monroe has been a part of Relay for Life since 1996. Last year the co-op raised $16,000 by collecting pledges, holding bake sales, lunches and breakfasts and by selling raffle tickets for a truck. Blue Ridge EMC raised more than $10,500 for the Relay for Life. Randolph EMC raised $1,400 by hosting spaghetti lunches and selling raffle tickets for donated prizes. And the list goes on.

Each year more co-ops get involved. Last year, was the first year that Albemarle EMC in Hertford participated in the event. The co-op drew a lot of interest to the event because of its ingenious pig-kissing contest. Each member of the co-op's senior staff had a jar on his or her desk. If donations in their jars reached $100, they were required to kiss the pig. Of course, the money was raised and senior staff puckered up. All together the co-op raised $4,100.

Each county in the state schedules its own event. Many are held in May; some are held as late as August. Check locally to find out when your county's Relay for Life will be held. If you're interested in volunteering or donating, contact the American Cancer Society regional office nearest you.

—Kim Whorton Tripp

American Cancer Society Regional Offices:

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Raleigh – (919) 834-8463
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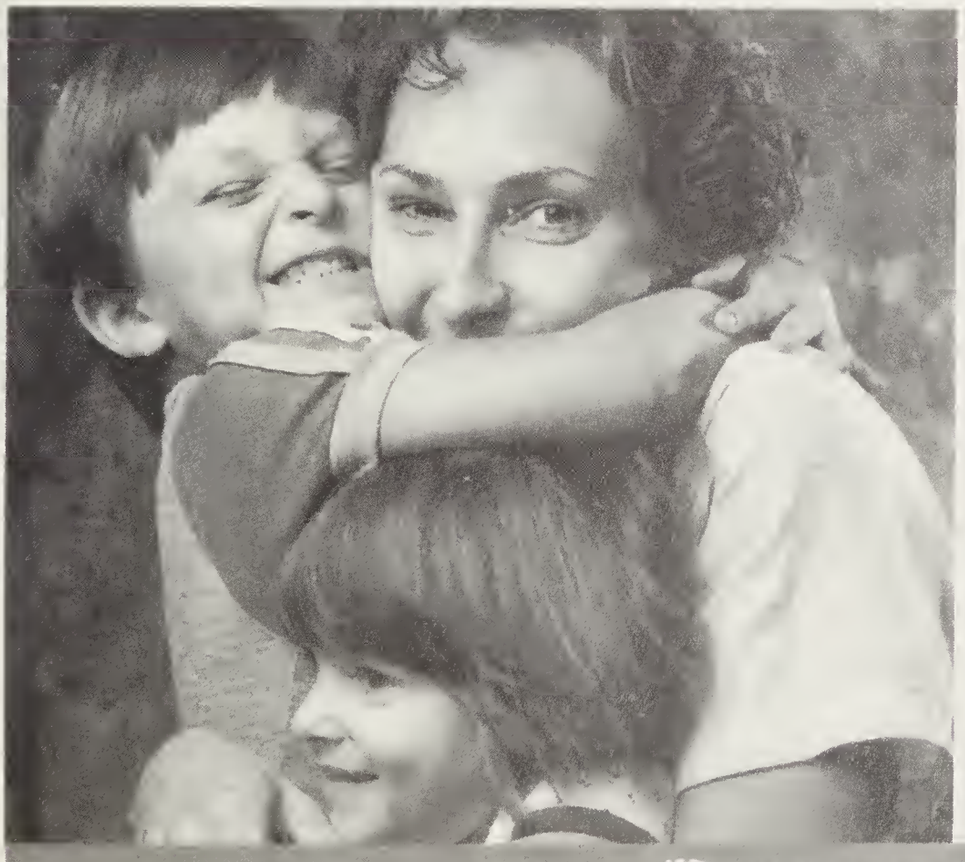

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With one qualifying child and earnings less than $26,928, or no child and earnings under $10,200, smaller credits are available.

Actual amounts depend on your total earnings and other income. And your qualifying child must live with you in the U.S. for more than six months.

Note: if you expect to qualify for the EITC in 2000 and want to receive advance EITC payments, check with your employer.

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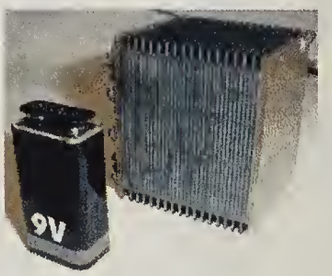
What are fuel cells?

And why are cooperatives interested in them?

By Dee Dobson Harper

As the electricity distribution market becomes more competitive, suppliers who can deliver safe, reliable, economical and environmentally clean power may be able to claim an advantage among consumers. A technology that is pointing utilities in that direction is the fuel cell. It is a technology that electric cooperatives nationally are examining with an eye toward offering to consumers some time in the near future.

Fuel cells are devices that convert chemical energy into electrical energy. Used for years as energy suppliers on the NASA Space Shuttle, a fuel cell produces usable energy – electricity and heat – without combustion and related pollution. It employs the electrochemical reaction of hydrogen and an oxidant such as oxygen to produce electrical energy silently, without combustion.



The fuel cell shown here is rated at 50 watts, which is 50 times more powerful and only slightly larger than a typical 9 -volt battery.
(H Power graphic)

A fuel cell operates like a continuous battery. As long as it is supplied with a chemical fuel and an oxidant (each typically located outside the cell), it will not run down like a battery, but will continue to produce electrical energy. It is actually a three-part system: one part is a fuel processor to convert fue to a hydrogen-rich gas; a second generates direct electrical current (DC) power; and a third is an inverter that converts the DC power to household-type AC power.

For now, most of the devices you can buy are still on the expensive side and do not compete very well with other energy sources when it comes to price. However, the economies of scale in manufacturing may lead to widespread use of fuel cells in the relatively near future, according to one firm in the business of making them.

A fuel cell sized for a residence can generate about 13,000 to 14,000 BTUs per hour — enough to heat the water and most of the interior of a 2000-square-foot house. These household fuel cells are "about the size of a dishwasher," says Jeff Almen, vice-president of marketing and member services for Energy Co-opportunity, or ECO. "You put it outside or inside the house. You can interconnect hot water or space heating to it."

Fuel cells are on ECO's hot list of new power trends. Established in 1998, ECO is a national organization of electric cooperatives. Its goal is to provide co-ops with energy diversification strategies, services and products to give them an edge in a competitive and rapidly changing industry. Recently, ECO formed a partnership with New Jersey-based H Power Corporation, a leading developer of fuel cell technology, to explore fuel cells as an alternate energy source in distributed power generation for electric cooperatives. H Power has advanced fuel cell technology by reducing cell size and weight while increasing power output. According to H Power, the technology can power "everything in your home, your vehicle and even your portable computer."

For more information:

U.S. Fuel Cell Council
1625 K Street, NW, Suite 725
Washington DC 20006
Phone: (202) 293-5500
Web site: www.usfcc.com

H Power Corp.
60 Montgomery Street
Belleville, Nj 07109
Phone: (973) 450-4400
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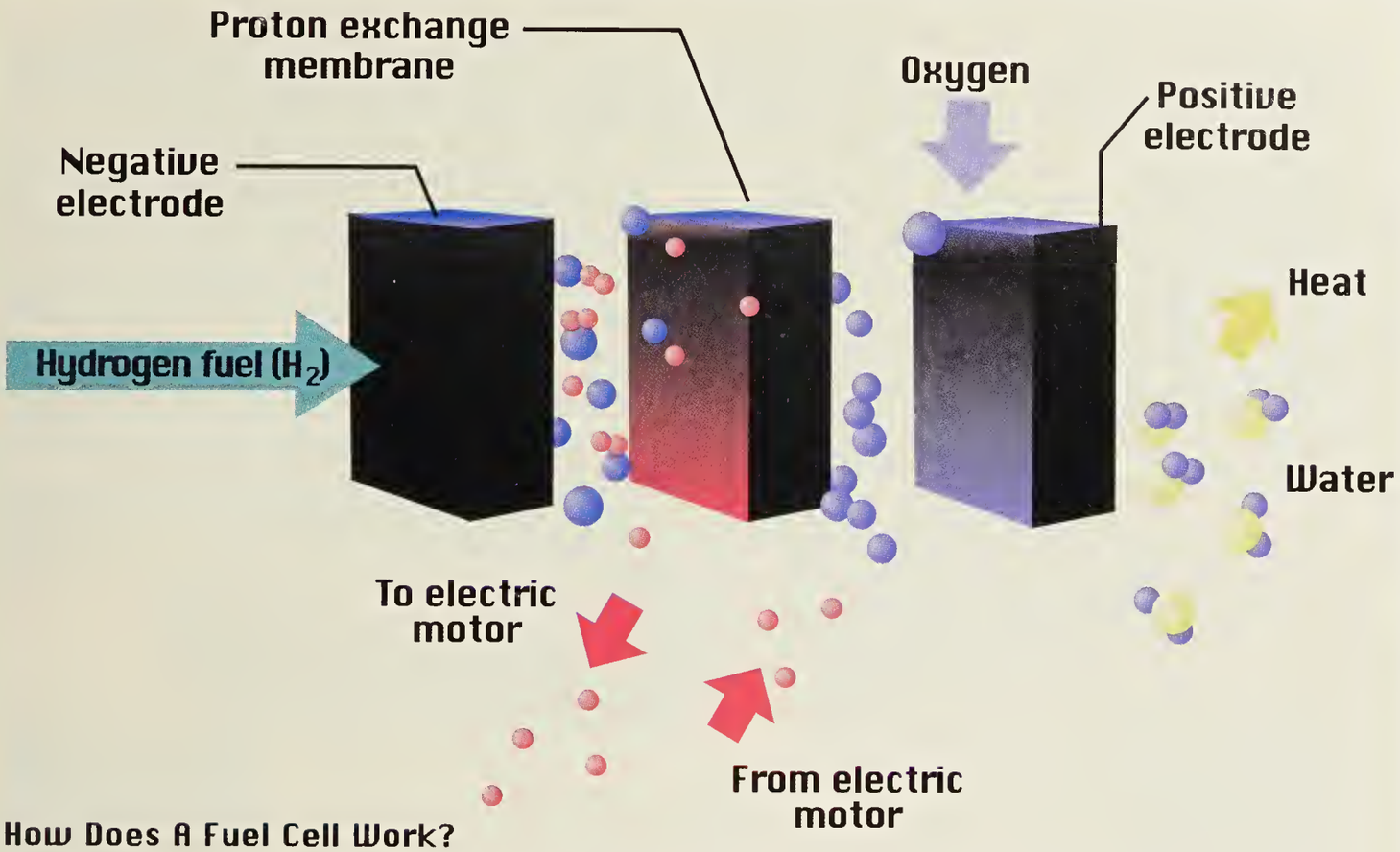
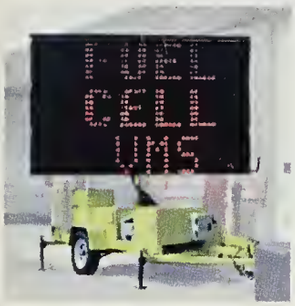


How Does A Fuel Cell Work?

In the HPower model, hydrogen fuel (H_2) enters the fuel cell which, like a battery, has a negative and a positive electrode. As the hydrogen molecules come into contact with the negative electrode, they split into two atoms and then react electrochemically, forming protons (blue) and electrons (red). The electrons flow out of the cell to be used as electrical energy. Meanwhile, the protons pass through an exchange membrane to the positive electrode where they combine with atomic oxygen, and with the electrons from the external circuit, to form water molecules.

Other than water, the only by-product of this process is heat, which may be reclaimed to increase the already high efficiency of the fuel cell.

(Diagram by Leisha Hodgson, based on National Fuel Cell Research Center graphics)



H Power Corp., working with the New Jersey Department of Transportation, designed and developed a variable message sign powered by a fuel cell that supplements the existing solar power source that charges the sign's batteries. By preventing the batteries from reaching a low voltage condition, the fuel cell system extends battery life.

"Distributed generation" refers to making electricity near or at the consumer's end of the line, in contrast to centralized generation at conventional power plants. Fuel cell technology, along with similar technologies like microturbines, is highly energy-efficient in comparison to centralized sources that lose approximately 10 percent of their power through transmission lines.

H Power Vice President of Research and Development Art Kaufman sees fuel cells as compact supplements to central power stations. They can provide utilities with reinforcement, increased reliability and peak energy supply. On-site systems produce neither noxious emissions nor noise pollution. "They're going to be quite quiet," says Kaufman. "The only noise associated with them will be noise from fans and blowers. If you have a furnace, you're accustomed to similar noise."

Kaufman calls fuel cells "a new business opportunity" for co-ops. It is a means, he says, for co-ops to meet the growing demand for consumer choice.

"In the early stages, they'll be a bit more expensive than they will be at full-scale production," says Kaufman. "As the manufacturing volume becomes greater, the prices are going to come down dramatically. The units will compete well even in the grid-connected areas. If you take your overall energy and fuel savings, you'll be offsetting incremental costs that are reflected in the initial purchase price."

Already they serve as non-polluting power sources in sparsely populated areas where traditional power supply lines can't be constructed.

It all boils down to choice. Almen compares the utilities industry to the telecommunications industry of a few years ago. At first, phone customers could have any phone as long as it was black and one of just a few designs. Today they have access to phones in a variety of color, style and functionality.

"Co-ops have always worked with customers to provide energy solutions, and the fuel cell may be another way to be able to do it," Almen says.

ECO and H Power are studying the potential impact of distributed generation and related technological developments on the industry, and evaluating its role in the energy future of cooperatives. Industry watchers will be focused how the issue unfolds in the coming months. If fuel cells prove to be the way to go, co-ops will want to get in on the action.

Dee Dobson Harper is a freelance business writer in Tarboro and a member of Edgecombe-Martin County EMC.

Recipes and reminiscences from the Melvin sisters

In "Family and Food: Recipes and Reminiscences," the Melvin sisters (Mollie M. Ward, Sara M. Riley, Betty M. Sanderson and Lela M. Harrell) relate family tales with good Southern cooking. The sisters, natives of Sampson County, describe the book as a "little insignificant discussion of the relationship of food to family, or if you prefer, family to food and memories of people and events."

The Melvin girls grew up in the Harrells area of south Sampson County. Their father and uncles owned the general store there and also were involved in farming, the mule and horse business, real estate and shipping huckleberries and holly to New York.

The book contains 10 recipe sections, with recipes found on about 170 of the 230 pages. The remaining pages connect family and food in three generations of the Melvin family, from the 1880s through the 1990s. An important part of the family history focuses on the sisters' father, R.H. Melvin, who served on the original 1937 board of directors of Four County Electric Membership Corporation until he died in1963.

The book sells for $16. For information on how to obtain a copy, contact Mosabele Publications in Apex, N.C. at (919) 303-0438 or send a check for $16 plus $4 shipping and handling to Mosabele Publications, c/o Mrs. Betty Gary Sanderson, PO Box 110, Harrells, NC 28444.

Dream Cake

Mrs. India Quinn, a Home Demonstration Club member from Rich Square, gave me this recipe in the late 1950's after she served it at a club meeting. — Lela Mae

1 cup plain flour
1/2 cup margarine
1/2 cup brown sugar
Pinch of salt

Mix and spread into buttered pan 8-by-10-inch. Bake 10 minutes at 375 degrees.

Mix - spread over above mixture:

1 cup brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup chopped nuts
Pinch of salt
2 tablespoons plain flour
1 cup shredded coconut
2 unbeaten eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla

Bake 20-30 minutes at 375 degrees. While still hot, ice with mixture of 1 cup powdered sugar, milk, and 1 tablespoon margarine.

Melvin Family Morsels

There is no documentation proving this but, according to oral history (which came to us through Uncle Edwin) during the Revolutionary War, the Tories came through the yard of the Melvin homeplace on their march from Fayetteville to Moore's Creek in Pender County.

When Mollie was just a toddler, Mother and Daddy had a very special dinner guest, Mr. J.H.G. Atkinson from New York. Mother used her very best linen napkins on the table. Mollie embarrassed Mother in front of Mr. Atkinson by asking, "Mother, why have you got diapers on the table?"

During the Depression years, distant relatives often came for extended visits because food was plentiful on the farm.

A special Sunday afternoon activity was taking a hike through the woods with Grandmother. Often we ate wild "sparkle berries" during fall hikes. We would also locate a holly tree to be cut later for a Christmas tree.

Wortley's Rice Casserole

This was an all time favorite of the children when they were young. One of the stories we enjoy recalling and retelling is of the night we had this rice casserole when Uncle Herbert ate supper with us. Uncle Herbert had a hearing problem, so he did not hear Caroline even through she asked him twice to pass the rice casserole to her. I sought to come to her rescue by saying very loudly, "Uncle Herbert, have some rice and pass it." He understood the first part, whereupon he reached over and served himself the last of the casserole. Caroline's mouth dropped open in surprise as she watched the last of her favorite casserole being eaten by Uncle Herbert. — Lela Mae

1 cup uncooked rice
1 can mushrooms
1 can onion soup or pkg. of Lipton soup mix
2 1/2 cups hot water
1/2 stick margarine

Bake in greased casserole for 1 hour at 325 degrees. Stir well after 30 minutes.

Grated Sweet Potato Pudding

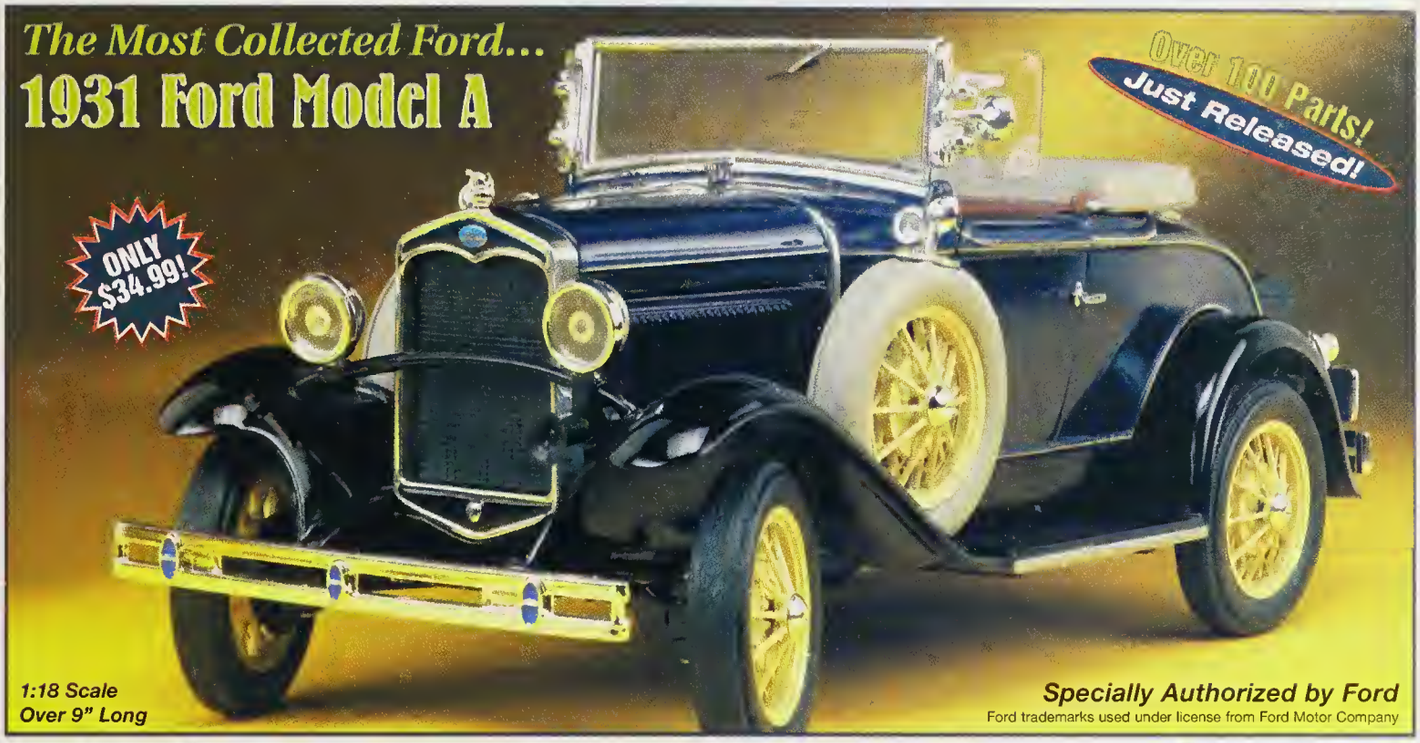
"Mother didn't have a written recipe for this, so we worked together one weekend to recreate what she used to do. This is what I wrote down." — Aunt Ethel's daughter Patty

2 eggs (or one egg and one round tablespoon flour)
1 cup milk (or 1/2 cup milk and 1/2 cup water)
3 cups grated sweet potatoes
1/4 cup melted butter
3/4 cup sugar (white and/or brown)
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla

Beat eggs and add rest. Bake at 300 degrees about an hour. Stir occasionally.

Grandmother had a sugar shell which to us as children had the most beautiful wavy design in the "bowl" of this spoon. We called it the "crochet" spoon. This was a favorite of the grandchildren and Grandmother would let us eat with it. Patty and Lela Mae, being the same age, would fuss over who was to have the privilege of eating with it. This problem would be settled in a most "unlady like" fashion — the first one to get the spoon would lick it so the other one would no longer want it.

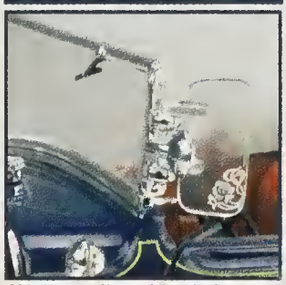
The Most Collected Ford...
1931 Ford Model A



Highly Detailed!

Both sides of the louvered hood open smoothly. The engine is authentically recreated in extraordinary detail.

Truly Authentic!



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Please allow 2 to 6 weeks after payment for shipment.

MRO26213 62

How to GROW businesses in rural North Carolina

"Incubators" combine local and statewide resources to nurture young business

By Lawrence Bivins

As the book is closed on the 20th century — arguably one of entrepreneurship's finest – it seems the ideal time to ponder who the Henry Ford or Bill Gates of the coming hundred years might be. Where is the next Sam Walton or Colonel Sanders now? In North Carolina, he or she may — for the moment, at least — be housed in one of the state's business incubators.

In North Carolina, as elsewhere, small business accounts for the Lion's Share of job creation – 80 percent, by one estimate. The importance of small business to local economies and communities in rural regions was part of the rationale behind the selection of Erskine Bowles, the Charlotte financier and former head of the U.S. Small Business Administration, to chair the North Carolina Rural Prosperity Task Force last year.

Many of us view small businesses as "Mom & Pop" drug stores, beauty shops, dry cleaners and roadside diners, and they are the backbone of commercial enterprise in most communities. But small businesses also have been the creative fuel for the technology revolution. The close linkage between innovation and small business led the General Assembly in 1983 to create the North Carolina Technological Development Authority (TDA), an organization that has contributed over $5 million in grants and low-interest loans to the state's business incubators. Today, there are 19 incubators in operation with another five in development.

The results have been nothing to sneeze at: incubator tenants, on average, start with two employees, "graduate" with six and now employ 14, according to research collected by the N.C. Business Incubator Association (NCBIA). The average graduate racks up annual sales of well over $1 million.

In 1985, the first incubator was set up in a 17,000-square-foot space at the Waynesville Industrial Park. The incubator has received $285,000 in funding from the TDA over the years. Additional support for the Waynesville site comes from local sources, and the incubator receives staff support from nearby Western Carolina University.

"We typically invest $200,000 initially to provide the bricks and mortar for new incubators," explains Ben Grinnel, director of business incubator development for the TDA. "We encourage our rural incubators to focus on technology and manufacturing businesses because they create the highest wages for rural areas."

Despite a few disappointments, the TDA's track record with the incubators has been strong, and most economic development officials believe the sites produce a healthy return-on-investment for both rural and urban communities. Supporters believe their value rests in a capacity to mine and cultivate local entrepreneurial talent by providing services and support that complement the assets business people are bringing to the table. In practical terms, this means business counseling, technical assistance from the local community college or university, shared administrative services and affordable rent.

The Business Development Center at Winnabow. The center is one of three supported by Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation. Similar sites are found in Whiteville and Tabor City.

Incubator clients are typically given two years to make their business self-sufficient. The expectation of them at that point is that they move out into the community and provide job growth and tax revenue for their towns and counties.

Thanks to community colleges

Though TDA support is common to nearly all of the state's incubators, a wide variety of other organizations play an important role. In some cases, the county economic development authorities are actively involved. Elsewhere, local chambers provide support. In a number of cases, a close partnership between the incubator and the local community college small business center (SBC) have sparked impressive synergies.

Glacier International's Fred Farina (right) and Geoff Shorrock survey their firm's inventory with John Horton (left), director of the Brunswick Community College Small Business Center. "We wouldn't be here without the incubator," Farina says.

"The real strength of the SBCs are in rural areas where economic development resources are often scarce," says Gayle Harvey, director of the Small Business Center Network at the North Carolina Community College System. The network links each of the state's 58 SBCs, which provide training, counseling and referrals to small businesses owners at little or no cost. "SBC directors know their communities – and what business ideas will likely work and not work."

SBCs began in 1984 and serve about 75,000 people per year. They represent the most extensive network of state-funded business support centers in the nation. Many of the centers' programs are oriented to start-ups with scant resources, though they also play a key role in supporting existing businesses with expansion, strategic planning and even export development. "Not everybody we see ends up starting a business," Harvey continues, "but not everyone we see should start a business."

Harvey, who was director of the Cape Fear Community College SBC prior to taking on her current position in Raleigh, points out that in the six cases where SBCs and incubators are co-located, tenants receive added benefits. "The [SBC] directors working in the incubators counsel their clients daily. It's almost like having your own private business advisor on site at your fingertips."

Brunswick County success stories

On that score, Fred Farina and Geoff Sharrock won't disagree. The two are founders of Glacier International, Inc., a manufacturer of water distillation systems that has been operating for the past two years from the Winnabow Business Center in Brunswick County. "We wouldn't have made it if it weren't for the incubator," Farina says.

Farina and Sharrock were directed to the incubator at the behest of the county's economic developer. Since moving into the center, Glacier has doubled its size and profits, and it is currently constructing its own new building nearby in Shallotte. Last year, the firm's success was recognized by the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce as Small Business Manufacturer of the Year.

"What's unique about the incubator is that everybody is connected," adds Shorrock in reference to the center's role as a hub for small business resources in the county.

He is particularly grateful for the day-to-day guidance the firm receives from John Horton, director of the center. Horton, who heads the Brunswick Community College SBC, came to the center after a successful quarter-century executive career in New Jersey. After an unsuccessful attempt at retirement, Horton volunteered for the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), a program supported by the U.S. Small Business Administration, before ultimately returning to work full-time to share his business acumen with newly-minted entrepreneurs. Most of Horton's counterparts across the SBC network bring equally sound business credentials.

"One of the things that make the incubator viable is that it gives budding businesses a sense of realness," Horton explains. "Many would-be entrepreneurs look at a vacant building and get cold feet. Having the incubator here, with other business people actively pursuing their dreams, frequently gives them that extra confidence they need to take the plunge."

Another of Horton's tenants is Medlock's Old and Rare Book Warehouse, a venture that grew out of owners Karen and Randy Medlock's longtime passion for book collecting. Through 10 years of sifting through dusty titles at thrift shops, estate sales and flea markets, the Medlocks decided to turn their hobby into a marketing venture. A business plan was drawn up and 800 square feet of space at the Winnabow incubator was obtained.

Not yet even a year old, the Medlock's business, which sells the books over the Internet, is thriving.

Continued on page 34

NC BUSINESS INCUBATORS

Regional Small Business Incubator
Ahoskie, NC
David C. Merrick, Director
252-332-5921, X-279
dmerrick@roanoke.cc.nc.us

**Cherokee County Business Incubator*
Andrews, NC
Joseph C. Hogg, Director
828-837-6810 x241
jhogg@tccc.cc.nc.us

The Ben Craig Center, Inc.
Charlotte, NC
Mark Schaffner, President & CEO
704-548-1090
mschaffner@bencraigcenter.com

West Charlotte Business Incubator
Charlotte, NC
J.C. Cousar, Director
704-377-0048

Regional Business Incubator
Columbia, NC
Mavis Hill, Executive Director
252-796-1991
tccdc@coastalnet.com

Triangle South Enterprise Center
Dunn, NC
Nancy Blackman, Director
910-892-2884
njb@nceye.net

**Fayetteville Business Incubator*
Fayetteville, NC
Dr. Charles Davis, Coordinator
910-486-1267

The Greensboro Center for Entrepreneurship
Greensboro, NC
John Stuart, Director
336-379-5001
director@greensborobc.com

Eastern Carolina Technology Center
Greenville, NC
John D. Chaffee, Executive Director
252-758-1989
pitt.edc@gtp.net

Gateway Community Development Corporation
Henderson, NC
Evon Smith, Executive Director
252-492-6298
gatewaycdc@gloryroad.net

More listings on page 34

"It's almost like having your own private business advisor on site at your fingertips."

Gayle Harvey,
Small Business Center Network

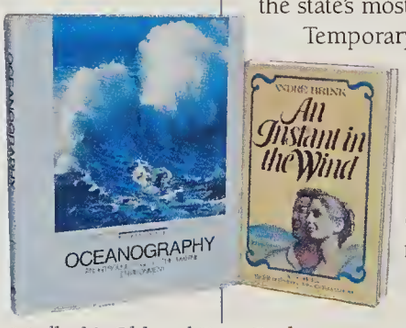
"The whole concept was job creation."

David J. Batten, BEMC, early developer of incubators

Its inventory of up to 40,000 out-of-print volumes crams their existing space, and soon they will move to larger digs elsewhere in the center.

In reviewing applications from prospective tenants, Horton looks not only for viable business ideas, but also for an exit strategy. "We expect them to be on their own in two years, but we're not going to be pushing them out the door unless they're ready. We want to be fair to them, though we also have to consider others who can benefit from the space."

And there doesn't seem to be any shortage of interested parties when it comes to setting up shop at the Winnabow incubator, which is housed in a 16,000-square-foot building, three quarters of which is leasable. "We had the center filled within six months of opening," recalls Horton. "Since the rent here is only about one-third of what the market would charge, we've never had trouble finding tenants."



Medlock's Old and Rare Book Warehouse markets its inventory of up to 40,000 volumes over the Internet.

Because the incubator doubles as the Brunswick Community College Small Business Center, Horton can count on a steady stream of emerging business owners through the building. "Co-location offers the SBC a living laboratory to showcase working firms for prospective business people."

Horton's sentiments are echoed at the other end of the state by his counterpart in McDowell County. "Putting the incubator and center together is good for both of us," says Dean Kanipe, manager of the McDowell Small Business and Industry Development Center in Marion. Kanipe's center — it was the state's second incubator, founded in 1985 — is jointly sponsored by the county, which needed someone to run the incubator, and McDowell Community College, which was looking for space to house its SBC. Co-location was a natural solution. "It gives the county more visibility as a site for small business to locate to," continues Kanipe, who currently serves as president of NCBIA, an association composed of each of the state incubator managers as well as the TDA and other groups.

The vision at Brunswick Electric

The Winnabow Business Development Center is, in fact, one of three in that region supported by the Rural Consumer Services Corporation, a non-profit subsidiary of the Brunswick Electric Membership Cooperative (BEMC), a longtime staunch advocate of the incubator concept. BEMC sponsored the development of its first incubator in Whiteville, in neighboring Columbus County, in 1989 and is currently developing a third site in Tabor City. In both cases, BEMC has collaborated with Southeastern Community College as well as other groups such as the TDA and the U.S. Economic Develop-ment Administration.

"The whole concept was job creation," recalls David J. Batten, executive vice-president and general manager of BEMC, who led the early development of the incubators. "So we concentrated on enabling new businesses to reduce costs by pooling things like office support, phone service, fax machines, secretarial support and utilities."

Since its founding, the 24,000-square-foot facility at Whiteville has graduated approximately 300 businesses into the county, one of the state's most rural. Among them is Coastal Temporary Services, which began in 1991 with two employees. Today, the firm services clients in North and South Carolina, employing as many as 500 temporaries per week. BEMC was one of Coastal's first clients and remains its largest.

Batten is understandably proud of the results his cooperative's involvement with the incubators has produced. Though he would like to see other co-ops support their local incubators, he cautions that success in Brunswick and Columbus counties came about gradually and required proactive day-to-day involvement by BEMC. "We succeeded because we got involved in supporting not just the incubators but the businesses themselves," continues Batten, who has managed BEMC since 1981. This meant frequently covering the rent or making short-term loans to cash strapped tenants.

"We weren't simply signing on in support of an incubator, we made a commitment to actually be there everyday and nurture it."

Lawrence Bivins writes about economic and community development issues. He lives in Raleigh.

NC BUSINESS INCUBATORS *Continued*

Perquimans 2020 Vision Coalition, Inc.
Hertford, NC
Leo Higgins, Coordinator
252-426-2020
leo@inteliport.com

McPherson Business Complex
Littleton, NC
Sybil Williams, Manager
252-586-5778
sybil@telpage.com

McDowell Small Business
& Industry Development Center
Marion, NC
Dean Kanipe, Director
828-652-6021, x520
dean.kanipe@bbs.mcdowel.cc.nc.us

North Carolina Aquaculture Incubator
New Bern, NC
Karla Gwaltney, Executive Director
252-638-4407

Raleigh Business & Technology Center
Raleigh, NC
E. Walton Jones, President
919-836-8618
w6412@aol.com

First Flight Venture Center
Research Triangle Park, NC
Willie Rich, Manager
919-990-8558
wrich@tda.nctda.org

Edgecombe County Industrial Incubator
Rocky Mount, NC
Joyce Dickens, Executive Director
252-442-5178
rmecdccommdeve@msn.com

Business Development Center
Roxboro, NC
Randy Reynolds, Director
336-599-0032
reynoldsr@piedmont.cc.nc.us

Winnabow Business Development Center
Winnabow, NC
John Horton, Director
910-253-3091
jmhorton13@hotmail.com

Small Business and Industry Center
Waynesville, NC
Thomas S. Fouts, Manager
828-452-1967
fouts@wcu.edu

Business Development Center
Whiteville, NC
John Horton, Director
910-642-7054
jmhorton13@hotmail.com

Wilmington Business Center
Wilmington, NC
Rubin T. Sloan, Sr., Manager
910-815-0065
cdcjp@wilmington.net

Appalachian Enterprise Center
Boone, NC
Marion Sofields, Diector
828-264-3082
econdev@boone.net

North Carolina Business Incubator Association
Research Triangle Park, NC
Ben Grinnell, Coordinator
919-990-8558
bgrinnell@tda.nctda.org

** Currently under development*

Why Diet? Try Vinegar!

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By Joan Jenive

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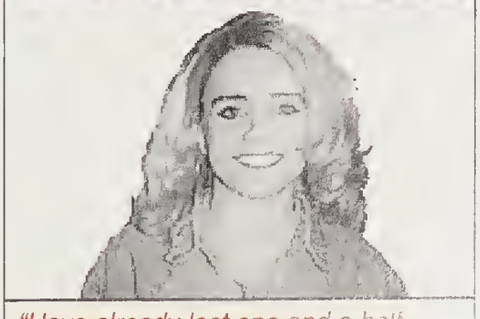
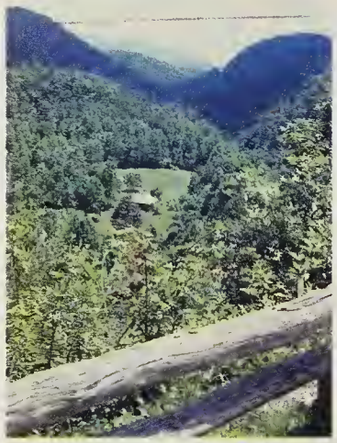


"Have already lost one and a half inches from my waist in 1 1/2 weeks"
Zora Lowes, Pensacola, FL

CAROLINA CLOSE-UP

Compiled by Renee Gannon



Ashe County color by bus

Editor's note: when we published the following "Close-Up" item in the October 1999 issue of Carolina Country, we inadvertently printed the wrong telephone number and Web address. Here is the correct version in full.

If your group is interested in "the natural choice" of Ashe County's mountains, rivers and communities this fall, try a bus tour by Lost Province Tours. A local resident who knows the place will show you the famous frescoes, cheese factory, Christmas tree farms, mountain inns, Blue Ridge Parkway, New River scenics, craft and art studios, country music and country cooking of this northwestern North Carolina gem. Call Lost Province Tours, P.O. Box 1498, West Jefferson, NC 28694. Phone: 888-877-4480 or www.fastransit.net/lptours.

Bentonville Battleground observes 135th anniversary of Civil War battle

Thousands of Civil War reenactors and spectators this month will converge on the fields and woods near Four Oaks in Johnston County for the 135th anniversary of the Battle of Bentonville. In March 1865, Confederate forces led by Gen. Joseph E. Johnston made a final attempt to prevent Union Gen. William T. Sherman's army from joining forces with Gen. U.S. Grant in Virginia. In the fields and forests near the small town of Bentonville, the two armies fought March 19-21, resulting in more than 4,000 total casualties and a major defeat for the Confederate Army. The battle was also the state's largest land battle. A month later, at Bennett Place near Durham, the two generals met again as Johnston surrendered to Sherman, ending the War Between the States in the Carolinas.

Photo by McKenzie & Dickerson

Bentonville Battleground saw three days of bloody action March 19-21, 1865. The battle is reenacted every five years.

At this year's battle observance, selected engagements will be fought again by costumed reenactors on portions of the original battlefield during the third weekend of March. Spectators can watch the re-creation of "Morgan's Stand" on Saturday afternoon, March 18, and "The Fight at Morris Farm" on Sunday afternoon, March 19. Costumed civilians will also be in camps near the Harper House throughout the weekend, and living history demonstrations and activities are planned.

The battle is sponsored by the Bentonville Battleground State Historic Site and Bentonville Battleground Historical Association. Tickets for the event are available through Ticketmaster at $10 per person, or $20 for the weekend. Children under the age of 10 are admitted free. All proceeds from the event go toward efforts to preserve and interpret Bentonville Battleground. For more information, call the historic site at (910) 594-0789, or visit the Web site www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hs/bentonvi/bentonvi.htm

Postcards from America via the Internet

For the last 17 months, more than 500,000 visitors to the Internet site www.postcardsfrom.com have been backseat passengers on the Information Superhighway with Priscilla Sarsfield, a former teacher, and her husband, photographer Ken Mahlenkamp, as they travel across the United States in an RV and send daily electronic postcards.

The last stops on their American tour included Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Washington DC and North Carolina. The tour, which began on Columbus Day at dawn atop Cadillac Mountain in Maine (the first place the sun rises on America), will end sometime this month at sunset in Lands End, Hawaii (the last place the sun sets on America).

Students and adults are learning about the 50 states and their capitals in this "You Are There" process. Visitors see and learn about a different state each week, and can either have postcards e-mailed to them or view a postcard on the Web site. Each postcard features a scenic photo on the front with a personal, handwritten message on the back. The postcard also includes a "special stamp" that features state emblems such as the state bird, flower, tree, flag or famous person. Clicking on the stamp links to a full-color enlargement of the state emblem, or the biography of a famous person. A special "just for teachers" section provides tips for using the postcards in the classroom and introduces ways to include parents in the learning experience.

The Web site also provides state-by-state travel tips, fun facts and a diary of life on the road. This first year of the trip is a Capitol Tour of each state. Next year, the travelers plan to feature the "wild side" of each 50 states, such as state and national parks, forests and seashores.

Free consumer information

Free, ready-to-use government information on topics like investing, retirement, getting federal benefits, buying surplus government property, small business sense, raising healthy children, buying a car, education strategies, food and health tips, travel, housing and money are available from the Consumer Information Center, a part of the U.S. General Services Administration.

Information is available at the Web site www.pueblo.gsa.gov, or call toll-free 1-888-8 PUEBLO (1-888-878-3256).

This Web site shows kids how pottery is made

At www.handsoncrafts.org, a cast of characters, from an animated mud dawber to a 14-year-old real boy from Seagrove, N.C., can be found demonstrating and talking about pottery-making on a Web site designed for children and their families. The project, Weaving a Tale of Craft, was developed by an educational partnership between the Mint Museum of Craft+Design and the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County under a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

The Web site, designed for ages 8-14, uses images from the museum's crafts collection, videos of young North Carolina artists at work, animation, recipes for crafts activities at home, and on-line children's activities, including virtually throwing a pot and "facing" a jug. Three young North Carolina potters are featured making pots and talking about their work, their families and other things. Featured are Travis Owen, 14, and his sister Bayle, 9, whose family operates Jugtown Pottery, and Erik Farrell, 10, whose family operates Westmoore Pottery, both in Seagrove.

Michael Sherrill
Tankards, 1978

The Web site has five sections: "Clay Studio, Mud Works Gallery," "The 'Ol Dirt," "Clay Lab" and "North Carolina Road Trips." The Mud Works Gallery displays the works of children as well as professional potters. North Carolina Road Trips enable Web visitors to locate galleries in specific cities or areas, such as Raleigh or the Blue Ridge Mountains. Web addresses to other craft sites are also included. A second phase of the Web site featuring fiber arts will debut next year.

The Mint Museum Web site, www.mintmuseum.org, also has three other learning programs for kids: "Crafting North Carolina" for fourth graders, "Dig It" for fifth graders and "On the Job: From Farm to Fast Food" for eight graders.

For additional information, visit the Web site or call the museum at (704) 337-2000.

Discovery Place exhibit teaches kids about prejudice and discrimination

"Face to Face: Dealing with Prejudice and Discrimination," a traveling exhibit designed to show children ages 7-10 how to deal with stereotyping and prejudice, is currently showing at Discovery Place in Charlotte through April 30. Developed by the Chicago Children's Museum, Face to Face introduces children to the many differences among us all, whether it is physical abilities, religious, cultural, racial or social background, and how to recognize discrimination and stereotyping that may result from these differences.

Stations of the exhibit include "Power Tool Stations," where family and student groups can explore emotions and role-play possible responses to name-calling. In "Exclusion Event," a school lunchroom setting demonstrates how peer pressure motivates discrimination against others. At this station, children are asked to make a choice through a touch screen interactive video about how they would react to a situation where a group of friends won't let a new kid sit down with them. Other stations include a Talk-Back Board, a Historical Perspective area, a Testimonial Video section, and a Resource Area. The exhibit includes labels in English and Spanish.

In addition, curriculum/caregiver guides will be made available to educators, parents and community participants as a companion piece to the exhibit. For more information about the Face to Face exhibit, or other Discovery Place offerings, call (704) 372-6261 or (800) 935-0553. A Web site is also available at www.discoveryplace.org.

Magic Club for kids and their parents

The "Entertaining Magic Made Easy" series of kits is a complete course of magic and features easy-to-read instructions and special props for a variety of magic tricks, hints on performing and special "club" incentives. Aimed at kids age 8 or older, the kits are an effort to build self-esteem, reading comprehension and long-term memory.

In addition to the basic series of four kits, subscribers also receive membership in a magic club, and are automatically offered discounts on catalog items and a Trick of the Month Club offering. Each kit (sold in sequence) is available for $29.95 plus $4 shipping and handling. Or the entire four-kit series can be purchases as one combined unit with all the special props and offerings for $93.95 plus $6 shipping and handling. To order, send a check or money order to KEE-West Productions, P.O. Box 480, Mayo, MD 21106. To order by credit card, call (410) 798-1677.

N.C. School of the Arts offers campus tours

In January, the North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem began offering guided tours behind the scenes in its "Stage Door Tours" program. The hour-long tours, conducted by specially-trained guides from the school's volunteer organization, the Associates, provide an insightful look at the only conservatory of its kind in the world. Visitors see selected classes, such as ballet technique, wigs and makeup, or stage combat, base on availability. Tours conclude with "Performance Hour," a weekly concert by students from the School of Music.

The tours are at 1 p.m. Wednesdays by appointment only, when school is in session. There is no fee, but reservations must be made in advance. Tours are limited to 10 adults. To schedule a tour, call (336) 770-1437. Or for more information about the school, visit the Web site www.ncarts.edu.

March

Carolina Compass

Mountains

Successful Gardener Seminar
March 4, Fletcher
Mountain Horticulture Crops Research and Extension Center, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., (828) 697-4891

Air Quality Workshop
March 6, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education, free, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., (828) 877-4423

Farm Toy Show & Auction
March 11, Jonesville
Holiday Inn, $3 (under 12 free), 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., (336) 468-2575

Talk'n Turkey
March 11, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education, free, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., (828) 877-4423

Blue Grass Gospel Singing
March 11, Lenoir
Features the Isaacs, Caldwell Co. Fairgrounds, (828) 754-7330

Footworks Dance Ensemble
March 16, West Jefferson
Ashe Civic Center, $8 adults, $3 students, 7:30 p.m., (336) 246-2787

Unifour Parade of Gems
March 17-19, Hickory
Shuford P.E. Complex/Moretz Gem, Lenoir-Rhyne College

Volunteer Day
March 18, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education, free, 2-4 p.m., (828) 877-4423

Beeswax Candle Making Workshop
March 18, Chimney Rock
Chimney Rock Park, 1:30-3:30 p.m., $38, (828) 625-9611, www.chimneyrockpark.com

Fishy Facts
March 21, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education, free, 4-5 p.m., (828) 877-4423

Mark Twain Reading
March 23, West Jefferson
Ashe Arts Center, $6 adults, $3 students, 7:30 p.m., (336) 246-2787

Backcountry Planning
March 25, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education, free, 1-3:30 p.m., (828) 877-4423

Aquatic NC WILD Workshop
March 31-Apr. 1, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education, free, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., (828) 877-4423

Jim & Jesse and the Virginia Boys
March 25, West Jefferson
Concert, Ashe Civic Center, 7:30 p.m., (336) 246-4483,

Piedmont

"Smokey Joe's Café"
Through March 5, Greensboro
Musical, Greensboro Coliseum Complex, (336) 373-7400

"Cash on Delivery"
Through March 12, Sanford
Comedy, Temple Theatre, $15 adults, $6 children, (919) 774-4512

Cultural Kaleidoscope
Through March 17, Greensboro
Asian and African cultures, Greensboro Cultural Center, (336) 333-7485

African-American Arts Festival
Through March 18, Greensboro
Throughout city, (336) 373-7523

"We Shall Overcome: 1954-1968"
Through March 19, Greensboro
Photo exhibit, Greensboro Historical Museum, (336) 373-2043

African Art Exhibit
Through March 26, Chapel Hill
Ackland Art Museum, UNC campus, (919) 966-5736

A Salute to African-American Men of Distinction
Through March 30, Greensboro
African-American Atelier, Greensboro Cultural Center, (336) 333-6885

Victorian Narrative Paintings
Through Apr. 2, Charlotte
Forbes Collection, Mint Museum of Art, (704) 337-2000, www.mintmuseum.org

"Little Shop of Horrors"
Through Apr. 23, Greensboro
Musical, The Barn Dinner Theatre, (336) 292-2211

The Giant Maze
Through May 20, Greensboro
Maze, puzzles, brainteasers, Natural Science Center of Greensboro, (336) 288-3769

Wood Art Exhibit
Through June, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Craft + Design, (704) 337-2000

Successful Gardener Seminar
March 1, Charlotte
At Southern Spring Show, Merchandise Mart, (704) 336-2561

Dixie Deer Classic
March 3-5, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Graham Building, (919) 782-5333

Carolina Hunter Showcase & Indoor Archery Shoot
March 3-5, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Dorton Arena, (919) 643-4455

Woman's Club of Raleigh Spring Antique Show
March 3-5, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Scott Building, (919) 782-5782

SRA Rodeo
March 3-5, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Hunt Horse Complex, (919) 639-9343

"Not One of Us"
March 4-5, Greensboro
Teen issues play, Temple Emanuel Social Hall Theatre, 7 p.m., (336) 852-3578

Dolley Madison
March 5, Winston-Salem
Lecture, Old Salem, MESDA Auditorium, $7, 3 p.m., (336) 721-7360

Animal Science Day
March 7, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Hunt Horse Complex, (919) 515-4006

"Black Beauty"
March 8, Winston-Salem
Family musical, Stevens Center, 7 p.m., (336) 721-1945, www.ncarts.edu/Stevens_Center

Leisure Living Spring Show
March 9-12, Greensboro
Greensboro Coliseum Special Events Center, (336) 373-7400

Arlo Guthrie in Concert
March 10, Greensboro
Carolina Theatre, 8 p.m., (336) 333-2605

"Antony & Cleopatra"
March 10-11, 16-19, 23-25, Raleigh
Drama, Theatre in the Park, (919) 831-6058, www.tip.dreamhost.com

Collector Car Event
March 10-12, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Graham Building, (919) 362-7000

Regional Orchid Show
March 10-12, Greensboro
Natural Science Center of Greensboro, (336) 288-3769

Pine Needles Invitational Golf Tournament
March 10-12, Southern Pines
Pine Needles Lodge and Golf Club, (910) 692-7111

NCJHA "C" Indoors Horse Show
March 10-12, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Hunt Horse Complex, (919) 556-7321

Kites
March 11, Mount Airy
Children's series, Foothills Arts Council, $10, (336) 835-2025

Apollo Ensemble
March 11, Greensboro
Chamber orchestra, Aycock Auditorium, UNC-G, 8 p.m., (336) 334-4TIX

Glen Campbell in Concert
March 11, Fayetteville
Cumberland County Coliseum Complex Auditorium, 8 p.m., (910) 223-2900

Lonesome River
March 11, Mount Airy
Bluegrass and Old-Time Music, Downtown Cinema Theatre, $14 & $12, 7:30 p.m., (336) 786-7998

Civil War Re-enactment
Youth Days
March 11, Waxhaw
Ages 10-17, Museum of the Waxhaws, registration required, (704) 843-1832

Golden Spike Train Show
March 11-12, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Scott Building, (330) 755-1914

Coin & Stamp Show
March 11-12, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Holshouser Building, (919) 828-9450

"The Frog Prince"
March 12, Southern Pines
Family play, Sunrise Theater, $4, 2:30 p.m., (910) 692-4356

"Route 66 – A Road to Remember"
March 12, Greensboro
Film, Carolina Theatre, 2:30 p.m., (336) 333-2605

The Boys of Walltown
March 12, Mount Airy
St. Patrick's Day festival, Gertrude Smith House, free, 2-4 p.m., (336) 789-4636

Concert
March 12, Southern Pines
Tenor and pianist, Weymouth Center, 3 p.m., (910) 692-6261

Piano Concert
March 13, Winston-Salem
Patricia Barnes Griffith, classical, Reynolda House, $10 adults, $5 students, 8 p.m., (336) 725-5325, www.reynoldahouse.org

The Spencers
March 14, Winston-Salem
Music and magic, Stevens Center, 7 p.m., $18 adults, $10 students, seniors, (336) 721-1945, www.ncarts.edu/Stevens_Center

"Cinderella"
March 14, Mount Airy
Children's theatre, Andy Griffith Playhouse, 7 p.m.,(336) 786-7998

Battle of Guilford Courthouse Anniversary
March 14-19, Greensboro
Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, Greensboro Country Park and Tannenbaum Historic Park, (336) 545-5315

"Another Strand in the Web"
March 15, Sanford
Children's theatre, Temple Theatre, $5, 10 a.m. & 12:30 p.m., (919) 774-4512, www.transoftinc.com/temple/

Irish Poetry Reading
March 15, Winston-Salem
Reynolda House, free, 8 p.m., (336) 725-5325, www.reynoldahouse.org

"Rumblestiltskin"
March 16, Sanford
Children's theatre, Temple Theatre, $5, 10 a.m. & 12:30 p.m., (919) 774-4512, www.transoftinc.com/temple/

"The O. Henry Conspiracy"
March 16-18, Greensboro
Play, Greensboro Historical Museum, 8 p.m., tickets required, (336) 373-2949

Raleigh Indoor Spring Classic
March 16-19, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Hunt Horse Complex, (919) 556-7321

George Jones in Concert
March 17, Greensboro
Greensboro Coliseum Complex, 8 p.m., (336) 373-3400

NC Antiquarian Book Fair
March 17-18, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Scott Building, (919) 933-9585

$ale of the $entry
March 17-19, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Graham Building, (419) 861-6400

"The Golden Goose"
March 17-19, Greensboro
Children's theatre, Weaver Education Center, (336) 373-2728

Carolina Golf Show
March 17-19, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Dorton Arena, (704) 366-8331

Irish Festival
March 18, Winston-Salem
Music, dancing, Reynolda House, free, 12-3 p.m., (336) 725-5325, www.reynoldahouse.org

The Blue Ridge Jamboree
March 18, Mount Airy
Bluegrass and Old Time Music, Andy Griffith Playhouse, $5, 7:30 p.m., (336) 786-7998

African-American Heritage Extravaganza
March 18, Greensboro
Greensboro Cultural Center, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., (336) 373-2044

"Dolley Madison and the Uninvited Guests"
March 18, Winston-Salem
Puppet show, Children's Museum at Old Salem, 11 a.m. & 3 p.m., (336) 721-7329

Arbor Day Celebration & Tree Giveaway
March 18, Greensboro
(336) 373-2199

Footworks
March 18, Mount Airy
Touring dance performance, Elkins High School Auditorium, $5, (336) 835-2025

"Liza and the Riddling Cave"
March 18-19, Greensboro
Family play, Taylor Theatre, UNC-G, 2 p.m., (336) 334-4849

Thomas Jefferson, Gardener
March 19, Winston-Salem
Lecture, MESDA Auditorium, Old Salem, $7, 3 p.m., (336) 721-7360

"Feed the Dragon"
March 20-25, Greensboro
Play, Broach Theatre, (336) 378-9300

Nubian Folk Arts Festival of Egypt
March 20-Sept. 30, Greensboro
Mattye Reed African Heritage Center, Dudley Building, NC A&T, (336) 334-3209

Kennel Club Dog Shows
March 21-27, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Graham Building, (919) 787-3631

NC Symphony Concert
March 22, Southern Pines
Pinecrest High School Auditorium, 8 p.m., (910) 295-3138

Raleigh Spring Premier Benefit
March 23-25, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Hunt Horse Complex, (704) 483-5000

The NC Renaissance Faire
March 24, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Dorton Arena, (919) 755-8004

Collegiate Golf Tournament
March 24-26, Greensboro
Top 15 women's college teams, Bryan Park, (336) 375-2200

German Heritage Festival
March 25, Pinnacle
Horne Creek Living Historical Farm, free, 12-4 p.m., (336) 325-2298

Seafest
March 25, Greensboro
Family fun, Natural Science Center of Greensboro, (336) 288-3769

"Women's Voice of North Carolina Music"
March 25, Greensboro
Dana Auditorium, Guilford College, 8 p.m., (336) 316-2400

The NC Renaissance Faire
March 25-26, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Holshouser Building, Heritage Village, Rand Grandstand, (919) 755-8004

"Sleeping Beauty"
March 25-26, Greensboro
Ballet, War Memorial Auditorium, (336) 333-7480

Bridal Festival
March 26, Jamestown
Castle McCulloch, 1-4:30 p.m., (336) 887-5413

Harlem Globetrotters
March 26, Greensboro
Basketball fun, Greensboro Coliseum Arena, 3:30 p.m., (336) 373-7400

Appaloosa Show
March 29-30, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Hunt Horse Complex, (336) 998-3266

IIIrd Tyme Out and Blue
Highway in Concert
March 31, Greensboro
Bluegrass, Carolina Theatre, 8 p.m., (336) 333-2605

"Forbidden Planet"
March 31-Apr. 1, Southern Pines
Drama, Sunrise Theater, (910) 692-3799

Gem & Mineral Show
March 31-Apr. 2, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds, Scott Building, (919) 772-3429

The Craftsmen's Classic Arts & Crafts Festival
March 31-Apr. 2, Greensboro
Greensboro Coliseum Special Events Center, (336) 274-5550

Events

Obsolete Objects
Through Sept. 4, Wilmington
Obsolete everyday items, Cape Fear Museum, (910) 341-7413

"The Word"
March 2, Elizabeth City
COA Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.,
(800) 335-9050

Ladysmith Black Mambazo in Concert
March 2, Wilmington
Thalian Hall, 8 p.m.,
(910) 343-3664

From the Ashes of WWII: The Rise of a New Modern Art
March 5, Wilmington
Lecture, Battleship North Carolina Auditorium, free,
8 p.m., (910) 251-5797

Discovering a Slave's Life
March 7, New Bern
Lecture, Tryon Palace Auditorium, free, 7 p.m.,
(252) 514-4900

Glen Campbell in Concert
March 9, Elizabeth City
COA Auditorium, 6:30 p.m. & 8:30 p.m., (800) 335-9050

Colonial Cooking
March 11, Wilmington
Burgwin-Wright House, free,
1 p.m., (910) 341-4030

"The Lion, the Eagle, and Dixie: A British Perspective on the War Between the States"
March 11, New Bern
Play, Tryon Palace Auditorium,
$4 or free with gen. admin.,3 p.m. & 7 p.m., (252) 514-4900

The Audubon Quartet in Concert
March 12, Wilmington
Thalian Hall, 7:30 p.m.,
(910) 343-3664

Riders in the Sky in Concert
March 16, Elizabeth City
COA Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.,
(800) 335-9050

Ceol na Eirrean: 18th Century Irish Music
March 16, New Bern
Tryon Palace Auditorium, $4 or free with gen. admin., 7 p.m.,
(252) 514-4900

Romeo and Juliet Ballet
March 17, Wilmington
Thalian Hall, 8 p.m.,
(910) 343-3664

Budweiser Wing Fling
March 18, Wilmington
Chicken wing cook-off for charity, Hugh McRae Park,
(910) 763-6216

Landscaping & Historic Gardens
March 21, Murfreesboro
Museum of the Albemarle preservation workshop, Hertford Academy, registration required,
(252) 335-1453

"70, Girls, 70"
March 23-26, Wilmington
Musical, Thalian Hall,
(910) 343-3664

Musical Theater in America
March 25, Oriental
Oriental Methodist Church, free,
4 p.m., (252) 249-3079

2000 Seafood Cook-Off
March 25, Wilmington
Jubilee Park, 11:30 a.m.,
(910) 341-4030

Old Fashion Planters Day
March 25-26, White Oak
Butler Farms, (910) 866-4503

Coastal Living Show
March 25-26, Wilmington
Trask Coliseum, UNC-W,
(910) 763-6361

Yayoi Toda: Wilmington Symphony Orchestra
March 25-26, Wilmington
Violinist, Kenan Auditorium,
UNC-W, 8 p.m., (910) 791-9262

Gardeners' Weekend
March 31-Apr. 2, New Bern
Tryon Palace gardens open free to public, heritage plant sale
(252) 514-4900

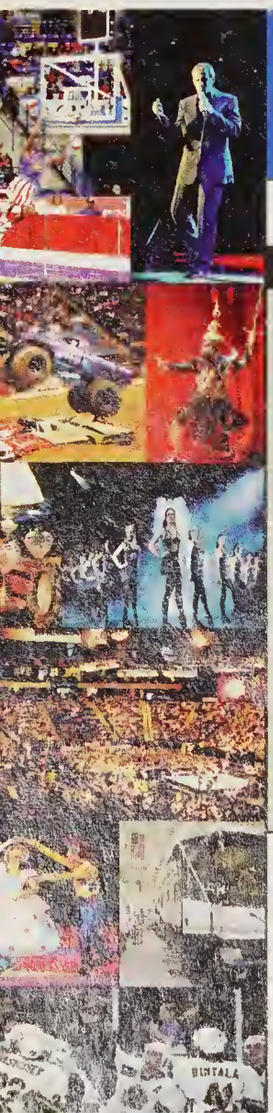
African-American Builders & Architects in NC: 1730-1865
March 31-Dec. 31,
Elizabeth City
Exhibit, Museum of the Albemarle, free, (2520 335-1453

A Tribute in Song to the American Musical Theater
March 31, Oriental
Pamlico Co. Civic & Cultural Center, $12, 8 p.m.,
(252) 249-3079

Spring Historic Homes and Gardens Tour
March 31-Apr. 1, New Bern
$13.50 advance purchase,
(252) 638-8558

Deadlines: May March 20
A phone number must be included with event listings in order to be published.

Send notices to:
Carolina Country
P.O. Box 27306,
Raleigh, NC 27611
FAX: (919)878-3970
e-mail:carolinacountry@ncemcs.com



Let Us Entertain You!

MARCH

DAY	DATE	EVENT	BUILDING
Thur	2	Hockey: Force vs. Oklahoma City	CL
Thur	2	Children's Theater	AD
Thur	2	Home & Garden Show 2000	AE
Fri	3	Home & Garden Show 2000	AE
Fri	3	Hockey: Force vs. Oklahoma City	CL
Sat	4	Home & Garden Show 2000	AE
Sat	4	WCW Wrestling	CL
Sun	5	Home & Garden Show 2000	AE
Mon	6	N.C. Symphony/C.C. Schools	AD
Sat	11	Hockey: Force vs. Tulsa	CL
Sat	11	Glen Campbell – Community Concerts	AR
Sat	11	Spring Craftsman's Festival	AE
Sun	12	Spring Craftsman's Festival	AE
Sun	12	Hockey: Force vs. Tulsa	CL
Tues	14	Children's Theater – "Charlotte's Web"	AD
Sat	18	D. L. Hugley Comedy Show	AD
Mon	20	Fort Bragg Graduation	AD
Tues	21	Hockey: Force vs. Huntsville	CL
Thur	23	Children's Theater – "Freedom Train"	AD
Thur	23	Summit Crest Homes	AE
Fri	24	Summit Crest Homes	AE
Sat	25	Summit Crest Homes	AE
Sat	25	Dr. Vernard Johnson	AD
Tues	28	Gospel Play	AD
Wed	29	Gospel Play	AD

• CL-Crown Coliseum • AE-Expo Center
• HP-Hospitality/Ballroom • AD-Auditorium
• AR-Arena • PL-Parking Lot • TC-Total Complex

Event dates are subject to change.
Call the Coliseum Box Office to confirm dates and times.

WCW WRESTLI
March 4

GLEN CAMPBE
March 11

D.L. HUGHLEY COMEDY SHO
March 18

FAYETTEVILLE FORCE HOCKE
March 2, 3, 11 12 & 21

For Tickets call the Coliseum Box Office 910-323-5088 or Ticketmaster 910-223-2900

Cumberland County Coliseum Complex
Crown Coliseum • Expo Center • Arena • Auditorium
Fayetteville, NC • www.fayettevillenc.com/cccc

CROWN COLISEUM

Word play

ward-war-way-lay

To go from TOP to BOTTOM, you may rearrange letters (r), change a letter (c), add a letter (a), or add a letter and rearrange the letters (a,r) from the previous step in this laddergram.

Definitions

highest point T O P

also _ _ _ (c)

short sound blast _ _ _ _ (a)

maxim _ _ _ _ _ (a,r)

lowest point B O T T O M (a,r)

Southern Exposure

How to get a state university gym roof fixed

Back in the mid-1950s, when W.D. Carmichael Jr. was vice president of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the university hired a new basketball coach, the legendary Frank McGuire, to put the UNC team on a par with the NC State team coached by Everett Case.

Coach McGuire found out quickly that the basketball court at Chapel Hill was about 20 years behind Reynolds Colesium at NC State. Woollen Gym at UNC was built by the Public Works Administration in 1938. The roof leaked badly, and McGuire wanted it fixed.

Mr. Carmichael was the financial driving force at UNC. Joe Hakan was the University engineer. Mr. Carmichael called Joe on a Thursday to meet him at Woollen Gym and show him exactly where the roof leaked. The VP made a few notes and left.

That Saturday night, UNC played NC State. It rained buckets. On Monday, Joe Hakan got an order from his boss, John Bennett, to write the specifications for replacing the roof.

As Joe Hakan tells the story, he just had to know how the funds for the repairs were obtained so quickly, so he called Mr. Carmichael to ask.

"Joe," the VP said, "I just took notes in my book of where you told me the water leaked on the seats, took a few seat numbers down, and made sure the tickets to those seats went to the head of the Appropriations Committee of the General Assembly. This morning he called me and said, 'Billy, that darn roof at Woollen Gym leaks like a sieve. I'm going to get you $20,000 out of the Emergency Contingency Fund to get it fixed.'"

"But, Mr. Carmichael," Harkan said. "How in the world did you know it was going to rain?"

"Well," said the VP, "you know I go to church regularly."

This is just one of many delightful stories Joe Hakan tells in his book, "Daddy, why are those two naked men sleeping in that tree?" published in 1996. Copies sell for $20.00 and are available in Chapel Hill area bookstores or from Joe Hakan, 121 S. Estes Dr., Suite 101, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. E-mail: hakanrhp@interpath.com

JOYNER'S CORNER

Domi-No.s

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Letters have been substituted for digits in this Domi-No.s multiplication puzzle.

Repeated letters stand for repeated digits. Can you replace the digits that change WINTER to SPRING?

Starting with W, pencil in the possibilities, then ink in the inevitabilities. You may want to cut out the digits below and place them under the letters.

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Clue: Given T=9, then W=___ and I=___ and S=___ and G=___ or___ ,etc.

W	I	N	T	E	R
			9		

X

W

S	P	R	I	N	G

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

MATCH BOXES

S	O	U	T	H	A	R	E	M	C
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Use the boxes above to find two hidden words in the answer to the multiplication problem below.

Answers on page 53

U	O	H	U	T	E	T	R	H	U	S

X

H

=

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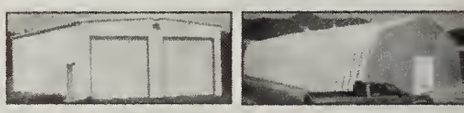

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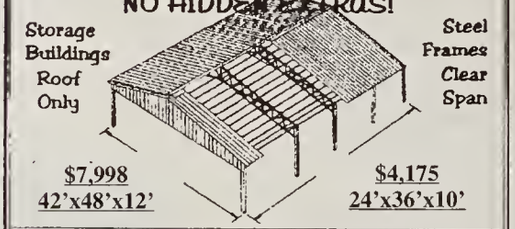

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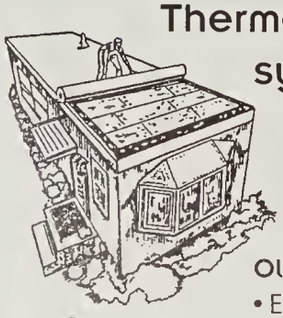

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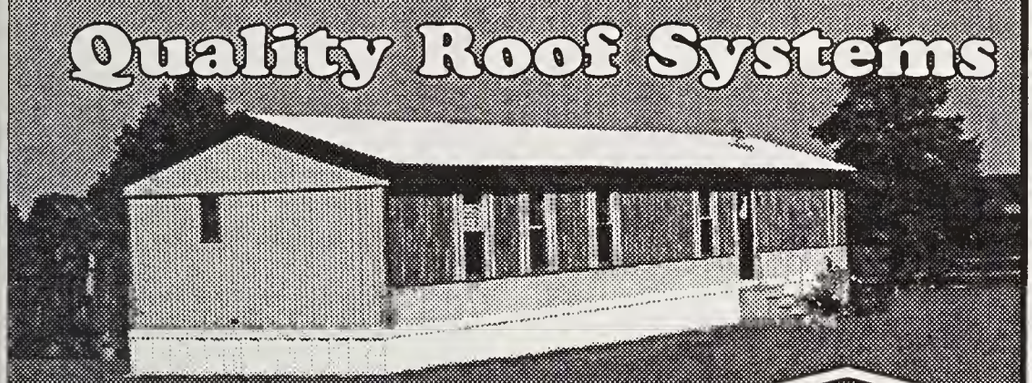

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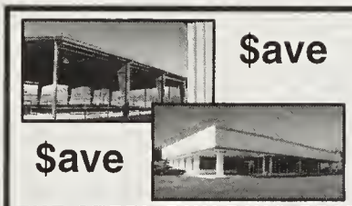

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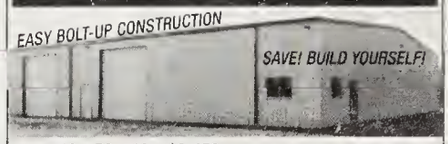

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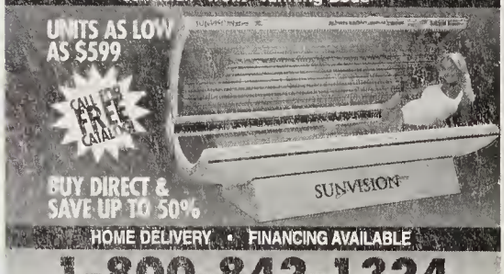

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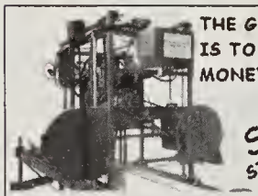

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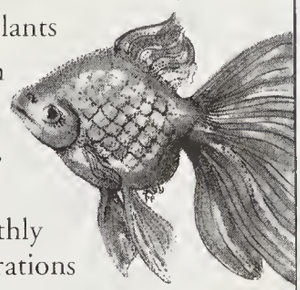

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ONLINE

Personal Computing Advice
By Reid Goldsborough

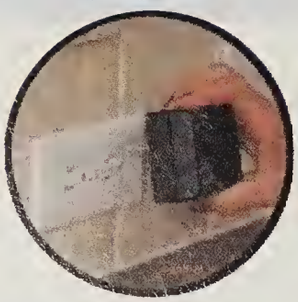
Finally: Easy Internet access for grown-ups

Setting up the I-opener

1. Take it out of the box and flip the screen over.

2. Plug the phone cord into the back and into the wall outlet...

...and attach the power cord and plug it in.



3. Power it on. The I-opener will instantly start up and you're on the Net.

From all the hoopla, you'd think the Internet was about to do away with TV, radio, CDs, retail stores, telephones, fax machines, books, magazines, and newspapers. While the Net does create competition, and opportunities, for businesses involved with these channels, a lot of people don't have, or want, Internet access.

More than 60 percent of the U.S. population aged 16 years and older are still offline, according to a recent survey by market research firm IntelliQuest, and 44 percent have no intention to go online.

Most analysts point to the cost and complexity of personal computers as the reason. Prices may be falling and ease of use rising, but PCs, Macs, and Internet access still cost good money. And unless you're a kid weaned on them, computers aren't child's play.

Seeking to tap into the potentially lucrative market of the computer illiterate, companies are introducing devices designed for connecting to the Internet that are smaller, simpler, and cheaper than PCs. Dubbed Internet appliances, these devices can only accelerate the Internet's growth.

I spent the past few weeks testing the one Internet appliance that to me looks best on paper, and I was impressed with its potential. I-opener from Netpliance of Austin, Tex., distinguishes itself from TV-based devices such as Microsoft WebTV in that it uses a computer monitor for better viewing of text and Web graphics. It distinguishes itself from personal digital assistants such as 3Com's Palm VII and smart phones such as Motorola's i1000 plus, in that it has a full-size keyboard for speedy text entry. And it distinguishes itself from e-mail devices such as the Cidco MailStation in that you can browse the Web along with exchanging e-mail.

The best thing about the I-opener is its automation. You just plug the power cord into an outlet and the phone cord into a phone jack, and the machine configures itself. Each time you use it you just hit the power button and the machine connects you with its internal 56 kilobit-per-second modem, using either a local or a toll-free number. If you're not local to one of its 300 access points, you pay no more for 800-number access, unlike with a typical Internet service provider.

The I-opener costs $199, and there's a monthly charge of $21.95 for unlimited access, which is the same as America Online but slightly more than most Internet service providers.

For e-mail, you get an address book and the ability to send and receive attachments, though you can't automatically append a signature to outgoing e-mail or filter incoming e-mail. For Web surfing, you can save your favorite sites, and you can access news, weather, and other pre-configured sites by hitting special keys on the keyboard. There's even a key for ordering pizza locally. The proprietary browser supports audio but not video.

The unit itself looks a bit like a notebook computer. The 10-inch flat-panel color display is similar though smaller than those used with notebooks; with its 800 by 600 resolution, it's quite readable. The keyboard, though detached, has an integrated pointing device similar to those used in portable PCs.

Since one logical market for Internet devices such as the I-opener is people who came of age before the PC era, I gave the unit to my parents to test. Their technical ability is such that they have no problem turning on a light switch. They were able to get up to speed quickly enough despite stumbling a bit coordinating the pointing device. In the first half of 2000, Netpliance plans to release another version of the I-opener with a touch screen that should make navigating even easier.

Though Netpliance expects to sell I-opener through retail stores, it's currently available outside of New York City only from the company through its Web site at http://www.netpliance.com, by phoning 1-888-iopener, or from a smattering of mall kiosks.

This is a new product, and bleeding-edge glitches are expected. Holding down the Caps Lock key crashed the system, forcing me to unplug and re-plug to get it working again. Also, I sometimes had trouble connecting to certain pre-configured Web sites, and in testing technical support I didn't always receive a call-back within two hours as promised.

Despite the snags, this is a clever product. A number of other companies are planning to release similar devices, including big names such as Compaq and Gateway and other smaller companies such as WebMachines and Qubit Technology. Though it's a start-up, Netpliance isn't wet behind the ears. Its founders include former executives from IBM and Cisco.

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book "Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway." He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or members.home.net/reidgold.

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ENERGY CENTS

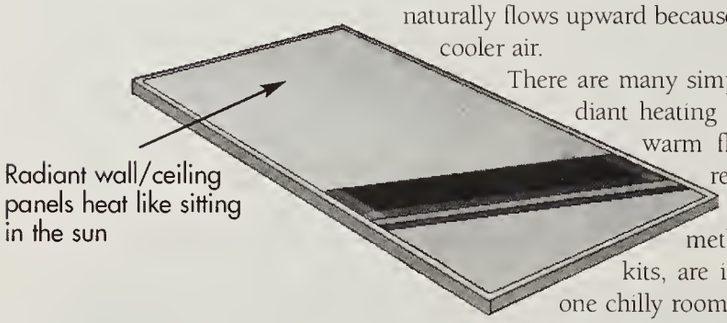
Consider electric radiant heat for efficiency and comfort

By James Dulley

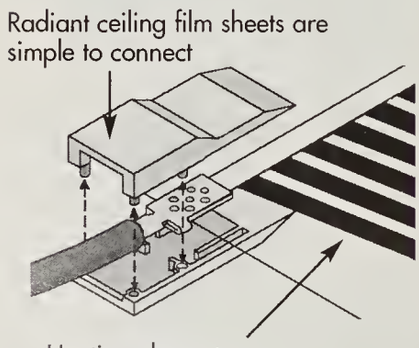
Electric radiant wall or ceiling heat is comfortable

Radiant heat is one of the most comfortable and efficient methods of heating a home. Just like the sun's rays feel warm outdoors on a cold winter day, radiant heating panels heat your body and objects instead of just the air. This allows you to keep your room temperature cooler, without sacrificing comfort, which reduces energy loss through walls and windows.

It is a common misconception that heat flows upward better than downward. Radiant heat energy, just like light from a light bulb, flows up evenly in all directions. This is often confused with heated air, which naturally flows upward because it is less dense than cooler air.

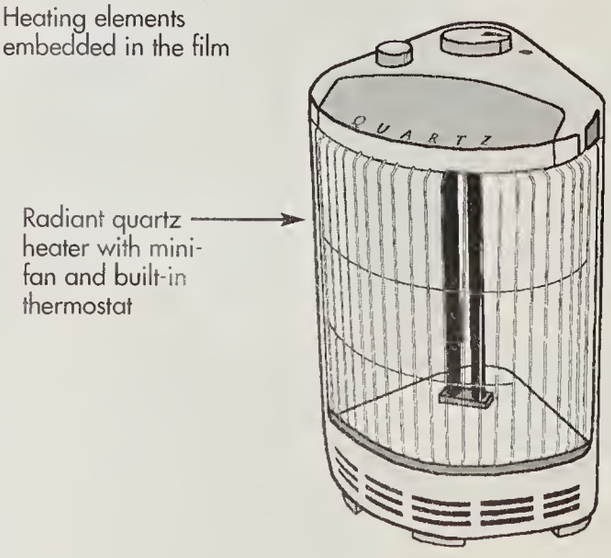


There are many simple do-it-yourself radiant heating methods, other than warm floor systems, which require a little remodeling work. These methods, often sold as kits, are ideal for heating just one chilly room in an existing home or for an entire new home. There are even small plug-in radiant units designed specifically to fit under a table or desk (for the office).



In addition to lower utility bills and comfortable steady radiant warmth, you will notice fewer dust mite and mold allergy problems. By eliminating the blowing air from a forced air system, radiant heat reduces airborne allergens.

The other key advantages of ceiling and wall radiant heat are that they are totally quiet and virtually maintenance-free. Since these systems heat objects and people in a room, not just the air, the room temperature stays fairly steady. Hot (near a register) or cold spots in a room are minimized.



Most people end up mixing and matching several different radiant methods or kits for different rooms in the house. Once you install radiant heat in one room and feel the comfort, you may add it in others too. Since the heating system in each room is independent, you can vary each room's temperature at different times of the day (called zoning). This yields major savings.

An excellent choice for almost any room is electric radiant ceiling panels. These are often available as large attractive panels (can be painted any color or pattern). Smaller 2- and 4-foot panels are also available to fit standard suspended ceiling T-bar grids.

For example, Berko's small 2-by-2-foot ceiling panels (only 1 inch thick) have adjustable heating wattages from 250 to 375 watts. A larger panel, 8 feet long, has wattages up to 1,500 watts. They are designed to be surface-mounted to your ceiling, or you can use a recessed kit. For bathrooms and pools, select a panel design sealing with silicone.

If you are handy with tools and you are doing some remodeling yourself, select special Therma-Ray by Canray or Panelectric radiant panels. Low-temperature nichrome wires are embedded inside the wallboard gypsum. You can order panels with whatever heating wattage your room requires. These are often used as a backup auxiliary heating source for homes using heat pumps.

Another simple-to-install option (Calorique) is a thin polyester plastic film with carbon heating strips sandwiched in it. This film is sized to fit perfectly in ceiling joist spacing. You just staple it up under the ceiling joists and attach standard drywall. Several companies also make heating cable that is attached to spacers behind the drywall.

Attractive cove radiant heaters (Radiant Heater Corp. and Radiant Systems) are the easiest to add to a room. These are long, narrow heaters that are mounted on the wall by the ceiling. In this position, one unit radiates heat out to an entire room. These are only several inches wide and are finished in many colors or wood graining. Wattages range from 600 to over 1,500.

If you have a small room or only need to heat a small area, use a quartz radiant heater. These produce heat almost instantly with no sound or annoying drafts. Some models (Marvin) also have very small fans to help heat a larger area. Other designs oscillate to cover a larger area.

Write for (or instantly download - www.dulley.com) Utility Bills Update No. 524 - buyer's guide of 13 radiant panel, film, cove, and quartz heaters, sizes, comfort controls and features. Please include $3.00 and a business-size SASE. Send to James Dulley, Carolina Country, P.O. Box 54987, Cincinnati, OH 45254.

James Dulley is a syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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Hank's Gardening Guide

By Hank Smith

As gardeners March into the first spring of the new millennium, tried-and-true techniques and procedures still apply. Any spring-flowering shrubs that have grown out of bounds should be pruned as blooms fade. Summer-flowering shrubs in need of control need cutting back now. A thick mulch will aid in protecting plants when hot or dry days arrive. Before hot weather arrives, plant ground covers to carpet areas where grass is a problem, such as beneath shade trees. Cover crops of vegetable gardens should be turned under. Call the local County Extension office for assistance in securing soil tests to determine pH acid-alkaline range of your soil.

March Hints

Roses

Selecting rose plants at local garden centers is never better than now. Look for old favorites as well as new ones offering disease tolerance and fragrance. Give thought to ways to use roses as shrubs and climbers. Soak bare-root plants in water overnight before planting in prepared holes.

Prolong life of cut roses

This formula is helpful in extending the life of roses used as cut flowers. It may be used as "water" in the container. Stir and mix well:

1 quart warm water
1 teaspoon alum
1 teaspoon Clorox
1 pinch iron rust *(ferric oxide, available at most drug stores)*
2 teaspoons sugar

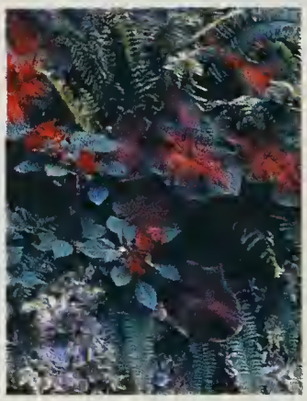
Coffee benefits

Rather than discard coffee grounds, sprinkle them over garden plots. In addition to being a mild form of organic fertilizer, they also repel many pests. And earthworms appreciate coffee grounds. Earthworms are good soil conditioners and are appreciated by organic gardeners.

Visit Carolina Country online to find more gardening tips and information. www.carolinacountry.com

Planting summer bulbs

Planting time for summer bulbs and tubers is coming soon. Caladiums need warm temperatures (70-80 degrees F) for sprouting. Get a jump on planting by sprouting plants indoors in clean, moist sand, Vermiculite, or moist peat moss. Transplant outdoors after temperatures warm up in late spring. Caladiums do better when plenty of organic matter is worked into a growing bed. Work in about three pounds of complete fertilizer such as a 5-10-10 per 100 square feet. Sidedress with the same amount when plants are 4 to 6 inches high. Gladiolus corms produce blooms earlier and have a higher yield when corms are stored at 80 degrees F for 15 days before planting.



Prepare for vegetable gardening

Sow seeds of tomato, eggplant and bell pepper indoors. These are to be transplanted into the garden after frost danger has passed. Young plants will need plenty of light or they will become tall and spindly. Sow seeds outdoors of such cold-weather vegetables as turnip, beet, spinach, English and edible pod pea, Swiss chard, kale, Kohlrabi and carrot. Transplants of broccoli, collards, cabbage, brussel sprouts and cauliflower thrive on cool weather before summer's heat.

Anthurium: Happy houseplant

This tropical American plant bears a flaring, heart-shaped spathe around a center spike. Sometimes called Flamingo flower, it is noted for the showy blooms that are long lasting, and foliage that makes it a year-round houseplant. Anthurium grows best in soil that is evenly moist, well laced with peat and sphagnum moss. It requires strong sunlight of a west window in winter and less light from an east or north window in summer. Avoid drafts. Plants are happiest with a temperature range of 60-80 degrees F year-round.

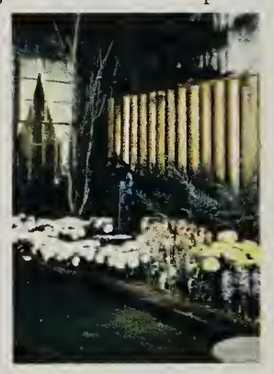
Lawn care

For early prevention, apply a lawn weed killer that will keep crabgrass seeds from sprouting and becoming obnoxious weeds. This saves many hours and aggravation for the rest of the season. Controlling lawn weeds is called selective weed control. It kills only weeds, not the lawn. For best results, apply when temperatures range from 60-80 degrees F. Controlling weeds and unwanted grass in areas other than lawns or gardens is called non-selective weed control. This means the product will wipe out anything it comes in contact with. Use this type weed killer on the patio, driveway, walkway and around fences.

Insecticidal sprays are very effective for controlling undesirable insects. Infected plants should be thoroughly treated, including underside of leaves where many pests hide. Be certain to read all label directions before using sprays and follow them exactly.

Scenes from side yards

Fences, trees and evergreen shrubs can help define a narrow space and create privacy. A background screen will add interest up front. Flowerbeds, pathways, shrubs and ground covers will focus attention on your side of the property. Consider the angle from which the area is seen. It may be viewed from a driveway, from a window within the house, or from the back yard. Add a flowering tree, bench, birdbath or sculpture to the most visible spot where the man-made accent serves as an exclamation point.



Shady subjects

If you are planning a summer flower garden for shady nooks, keep in mind that such spots can contribute summer color – even those in heavy shade. These annuals will endure: balsam, cockscomb, calliopsis, godetia, lobelia, periwinkle, impatiens and flowering tobacco. Taller growing annuals are effective when based with caladiums.

"Deer-off"

One application of this deer repellant lasts about three months. Rains will not wash it away. Made from hot peppers, garlic and eggs, Deer-off leaves an odor and taste that is offensive to deer. Since the deer population increases each year, it is helpful to gardeners as deer often eat desirable plants. This all-natural repellent is registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It is available at garden centers.

Container gardening

Plants growing in containers need to be checked frequently to see if they need moisture in the soil. Stick a finger into the soil to see if they need water. Those in full sun often need daily watering. Containers located in shady spots will dry out in two or three days during mild weather. Pots, urns, window boxes and other containers are more productive plant-wise if a slow-release fertilizer is added to the soil mix. Supplement this with a water-soluble fertilizer every two weeks, or use half-strength every week.

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Match Boxes

Word Play

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MOTTO
BOTTOM

Domi-No.s answer to be published in the May magazine.

Lynne's Corner Answers

CAROLINA KITCHEN

A fast-to-fix feast for six

This will get you out of the kitchen in about 30 minutes.

Cheeseburger Loaf

1 pound ground beef
1/4 cup chopped onion
1 can (10- 3/4 ounces) condensed tomato soup, undiluted
1/2 teaspoon garlic salt
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 loaf (1 pound) French bread (unsliced)
1 tablespoon butter, softened
8 ounces process American or Mexican-flavored cheese, sliced

In a saucepan over medium heat, cook beef and onion until meat is no longer pink; drain. Add soup, garlic salt, salt and pepper; simmer for 5 to 10 minutes. Meanwhile, slice the top third off the bread. Hollow out bottom half of loaf, leaving a 3/4–inch shell (save removed bread for another use). Spread butter on cut side of bread. Place bread on baking sheet and broil until lightly browned. Spoon beef mixture into shell; arrange cheese slices on top. Broil until cheese is melted, about 2 to 3 minutes. Replace bread top. Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

Zesty Potato Soup

4 large potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 cups water
1 teaspoon dried minced onion
1 garlic clove, minced
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 cup milk
4 ounces process American cheese, cubed
1/3 cup chopped green chilies
2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon chicken bouillon granules
2 teaspoons minced fresh parsley

In a large saucepan, combine the potatoes, water, onion, garlic, salt and pepper; bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. (Do not drain.) Mash potatoes in liquid until almost smooth. Add remaining ingredients; cook and stir until cheese is melted. Yield: 6 servings

Butterscotch Pecan Cookies

1 package (18- 1/4 ounces) butter recipe cake mix
1 package (3.4 ounces) instant butterscotch pudding mix
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
3/4 cup vegetable oil
1 egg
1 cup chopped pecans

In a mixing bowl, combine the first five ingredients; mix well. Stir in pecans (the dough will be crumbly). Roll tablespoonfuls into balls; place 2 inches apart on greased baking sheets. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes or until golden brown. Cool for 2 minutes; remove from pans to wire racks. Yield: 4 dozen.

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